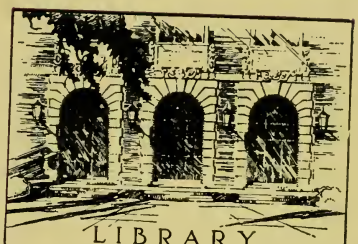
[Frances C. A. Cox.]

(no B.M. C.V.)



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
823
C8393c
v. 1

THE CAMISARD.

THE

CAMISARD;

OR, THE

PROTESTANTS OF LANGUEDOC:

A Tale

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR GEO. B. WHITTAKER,
AVE-MARIA LANE.

1825.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES,
Northumberland-court.

823
C8393c
v.1

THE

CAMISARD;

OR, THE

PROTESTANTS OF LANGUEDOC.

SEARCY MAY 18 1954

CHAPTER I.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn, and France displays her bright domain;
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please.

GOLDSMITH.

On a very fine evening, towards the end of the month of February, in the year 17—, as the peasants of Vallerargues, a village of Lower Languedoc, were engaged on the public walk at their usual diversions, a fourgon, the common conveyance of the lower orders in that part of the country, passed through the different

groups of idlers, and stopped opposite a small cottage at the extremity of the village, which had been for some months untenanted; but curiosity, ever on the alert, had already learned that it was let to a lady, who was expected immediately to occupy it. This circumstance, in itself extremely simple, was not sufficient for more than the conversation of one veillée; various additions were therefore made to the fact. It was naturally concluded that the lady was not very rich, since she put up with a residence that had not proved too splendid for the late village carpenter. Some affirmed that she was flying from a tyrannical husband, and hoped in this obscure retreat to elude his pursuit; some, that she was a widow of rank, but of singular piety, and that the choice of such an abode was the consequence of a vow of mortification; none, however, expected

her to arrive in such humble style; and the fourgon in which Madame Durand travelled from the last post town did not withdraw one foot from the dance, or disperse one coterie of chattering females. When she therefore descended from the vehicle, only a few straggling children, easily attracted by the noise of wheels, clung to the garden-gate, and with eager looks watched every thing that passed.

"And where, Madame, is this to go, and where is there place for this?" asked the man who drove the fourgon, as he looked sorrowfully around on the melancholy-looking rooms. "It never will do," he continued: "I always said you never could live in a poor cottage, after being used to so many comforts; and so I told you, Madame, and if you would believe me you'd have staid where I am sure you might have been as happy as the birds of

the air. Now you've seen for yourself, do, Madame, return with me, for glad I should be to take you back, and overjoyed my poor master to see you."

Madame Durand shook her head, and endeavoured to smile at the desolation that so much chagrined her honest conductor. It is certain the place did look very dreary, but she was careful to conceal her thoughts from Henri, who in his zeal would not fail to exaggerate all her expressions to him, who for many years smiled only when she was pleased, and considered her comfort as at least equal in importance to the happiness of the rest of the world.

The cottage, as is common in warm climates, was built with a wooden staircase and rude gallery on the outside, sheltered by the eaves of the sloping roof. This was covered by a wide spreading

vine, which in the season of its beauty doubtless concealed the stained walls and red tiles; but now the young leaves, scarcely beginning to appear, were but a slender ornament, and its bare straggling branches called in vain for the gardener's care. This gallery faced the west; and as Madame Durand opened the shutters of the upper rooms, the bright beams of the setting sun bursting in with all their splendour, gave an air of cheerfulness to the naked whitewashed wainscot. A little girl, who had brought the keys, followed her in her examinations, and pointed out every convenience, and enlarged on every excellence, with a volubility that was evidently the effort of sincere admiration; for the carpenter's house had always been considered as a specimen of his skill, and had gained him much occupation among that simple people. It

was not with equal discretion that she insisted on pointing out the very spot where he had breathed his last in a fit of coughing, brought on by violent passion at the apothecary's declaring his asthma must soon put an end to his life. The child shuddered as she spoke, and crossing herself devoutly, hastened to join her companions.

Meanwhile Henri, having emptied the fourgon, stood with his hat in his hand, unwilling to go, yet unable to think of any excuse for remaining, as the owner of the cart from whom he had hired it at the next town stipulated for its return that night. He placed and replaced the simple articles of furniture he had brought, rubbed off the dust they had gathered on the road, and seemed determined on being dismissed rather than taking leave. It was painful for Madame

Durand to part even with an attached domestic, when, after his departure, she should find herself, for the first time in her life, entirely among strangers. Henri Loban was by birth a Swiss—faithful, like all his countrymen—blunt and honest; and forgetting, in the affection which was the result of many years' service, that his employers were not born in the sight of the Glaciers. It was in the neighbourhood of his father's cottage that Madame Durand and her brother, then happy in the presence of a much-loved wife, had taken up their abode, when some unhappy circumstances had rendered a residence in France impossible. Henri had served them from the period his age permitted him to be useful; and the familiarity time had produced, increased by the interest he had often manifested for their distresses, made him participate in all that

concerned the family. It was for this reason he had been chosen to accompany Madame Durand, when, after an absence of nearly twenty years, she was led to revisit her native land, in quest of that justice which bigotry and oppression sought to deny her brother, the only being whose interest still bound her to earth. The certainty that he would impatiently reckon the hours till assured of her safe arrival at Vallerargues checked her desire of detaining him till she should be more settled in her new abode; and having written a few lines to remove all apprehension from his master's mind, slipped some money into his hand, and bade the faithful creature farewell. Henri was about to put it back; but a sudden recollection seemed to strike him that Madame was most likely to know what she could spare,—and how his Janette's eyes would

sparkle at the sight of the gold,—so, deeming it presuming to be more disinterested than the occasion required, he jirked up his blue smock-frock, to let the money slide into his pocket; then, taking off his worked scarlet cap, and making a profound bow, extended a hand to Madame Durand with a look of respect that claimed her pardon for the liberty, and wishing her a speedy return to dear Switzerland, with good health and spirits while she was absent, withdrew to hide a tear that was starting in his eye, and cheered himself for the pain he felt at parting by the loud authoritative cracking of his whip as his fourgon again rattled through the street of the village.

Madame Durand watched till the last sound died away, and then locking the lower rooms, the chief of which were a kitchen and carpenter's workshop, slowly

ascended the stairs, and seated herself at the window facing the west, the prospect from which afforded her just before so much pleasure. But the sun had entirely disappeared behind the hills—the last lingering glow was gone—and a gray twilight already veiled every object. Though the short winter of the South was past, the evenings were yet chilly; and she wondered that any feeling of gratification could be excited in a place that now appeared so forlorn and dismal. Her ideas gradually became more sad; and lost to the present moment, she was busily retracing former scenes and former pleasures, and clothing them with the gloomy veil that memory too often throws over what is gone for ever, when she was roused from the idle and dangerous employment by the sound of footsteps ascending the wooden stairs, and a country

girl, of about nineteen years of age, entered the room with a low curtsey, after carefully depositing her sabots at the door. She began, in voluble Patois, to address Madame Durand; and that lady found it so difficult to understand a language from which her ear had been many years estranged, that she scarcely gathered more than the information of her belonging to M. le Pasteur, from whom at length she produced a short but friendly note, stating, that owing to the uncertainty attending the time of her arrival, he had unfortunately been induced to absent himself and family on some particular business, but had left orders with Annette, their maid, to pay attention to whatever Madame Durand might immediately require.

Annette's large sparkling dark eyes alone saved her from being considered

absolutely ugly; but the intelligence of their glances in some measure compensated for a snub nose, dark complexion, and mouth of more than correct dimensions. Her dress was the costume of the Grisettes, to which class she aimed at belonging, and consisted of a bodice of black velvet with long sleeves, a dark petticoat, and large scarlet apron with pockets and braces: on her head a muslin cap, with lace that might have excited the envy of many a belle, under which the hair was turned up so as to form a high toupée, while a few curls were confined on the forehead by a white bandeau trimmed to correspond, and distinguished by the name of a "sarafrond," or "frontaon." This head-dress was ornamented by a band and bows of black velvet; and on Sundays and holidays large gold drop ear-rings, with chains and

crosses of the same precious metal, completed the gay attire.

Annette finding it extremely difficult to learn the stranger's wishes, began to exercise her ingenuity, and wisely consulting her own feelings, perceived that the first requisite in a room that had been some time unoccupied was fire; so tucking the folds of her apron in its belt, she disappeared with a smile, saying, "Tutt' oura revendrai," and in a few minutes returned loaded with dry branches of vine and logs of decayed olive trees, which form the chief fuel of the country, and speedily kindled such a blaze as diffused an appearance of comfort around. A light supper was also soon procured; and perceiving by Madame Durand's looks that she was pleased with her attentions, she proceeded to arrange the broken table and chairs in the best manner possible,

prepared a bed which she declared to be fit for the queen, and withdrew with a curtsey still lower than at her entrance, and a kindly "Buon suer, buon suer, Madama."

Once more left to herself, Madame Durand began strictly to examine her own heart, and to condemn the spirit of listlessness that seemed stealing over her. It is not, she thought, by this indulgence of vain sorrow, that I am to follow the plan I have marked out. It is only by being continually watchful that I can take advantage of the opportunities that may favourably occur to advance my design. I must remember, too, that many persons I formerly disregarded, circumstances have now raised into importance, and that when a woman embarks in any business, it is by constant attention, more than authority or force, that she can hope to succeed. I

must for a while forget what I have been; and not awaken suspicion by an affectation of superiority, that may excite deference, but not regard; I must not, she added, smiling, again shiver with cold, in the expectation of some kind sylph or fairy to light my fire.

While Madame Durand was thus employed in sobering down her ideas to her present situation, and casting away all the tinsel of life as unsuited to a cottage, the whole village had been already apprised of her arrival, and many had expressed their wonder and their disappointment. "But are you sure it's the lady herself?" exclaimed the mothers and elder daughters to the children, who had run back with the intelligence.

"Yes, that we are," cried all the little rabble at once, "don't you think our eyes are clear enough for that?"

"And what had she on, my dears?" said an ancient damsel, who having visited the capital some thirty years ago, still dictated fashions at Vallerargues.

The children were rather puzzled by the question, but one remembered it was something black.

"What! no feathers, no lace, no trimmings?" she replied. "Well, then, believe me, it's only the maid; for you know, as I've told you all a hundred times, it's dress shows a lady of taste; take my word for it these children are mistaken. How should they be able to judge who have never been out of their own village."

"I wonder," interrupted the woman who let out the chairs at the church, "whether she is a good Catholic?"

"There is no saying," cried Annette, the Pastor's maid, "but I know my master has had a letter about her coming, and

now I think of it, I was ordered to be at the carpenter's every evening to wait her arrival; so, good by'e, I shall soon know more than you all."

So saying she tripped away, and there is no deciding whether curiosity or obedience to her master had the greatest weight in inducing her to visit Madame Durand.

Mademoiselle Leah Coste, the lady we have just mentioned, silently resolved to judge for herself at the first opportunity to what class in society the stranger belonged. She trusted to her infallible tact, and put off only till the next day, a visit of compliment, fully determined to examine with great attention, and either lavish or restrain her civilities, as might, after due consideration, appear advisable.

Desirous as we are of appearing at all times the advocates of the fair sex, it

would be a most agreeable task to inform our readers, that Mademoiselle Coste was no less eminent for her illustrious birth, than for the gifts of beauty and fortune; but truth compels us to confess, this young lady of fifty was the daughter of an eminent dealer in salt and fresh pork, who left the bulk of his property and his stock and experience in trade to his sons, and to his daughter a small sum of ready money, the greater part of which she spent during a winter at Paris, in a matrimonial chace of gaiety and folly, and upon the remembrance of which she still contrived to subsist in her native village, as few were so poor as to be beneath her cajoling entreaties for assistance, and few so hardhearted as to refuse what they could spare to one who had seen better days. Meantime, she sat almost continually by a little stove, in a room half

darkened, and littered with every thing that could render it untidy and disgusting, boiling a pot of bad coffee, though sometimes trusting to chance for the bread that was to be eaten with it, and performing no one office of kindness to her neighbours, except under that head we may class the cutting the gowns and cloaks of the silly village girls, into pompadones and negligés, such as she had admired in the fashions of her youth, and which said garments, when thus metamorphosed, were seldom of more utility to their owners, than the five caps which the tailor produced for the Squire of La Mancha's knight out of the piece of cloth given him for coat, doublet, and breeches.

A life more useless than that of Leah Coste's can scarcely be imagined,or a disposition more mischievous; but her mischief resembled that of the gnat, who

stings with all the fury of a scorpion, but without his power to harm.

To procure a severe beating to some unfortunate urchin whom she watched into a neighbour's vineyard, to set some notable housewife railing against her heedless maid for not giving her undivided attention to the wheel at which she was spinning near this damsel's window, to cause the master's stick to be laid on the shoulders of the luckless Muleteers or Vinedressers whom she overheard not unfrequently relaxing from their labours in a little friendly conversation, were her every day exploits. Sometimes servants were discharged, lovers parted, the most admired beauties looked upon with scorn, and old friends who had never met but with pleasure, chilled for a time by mutual but concealed causes of discontent. Yet as the informations given by this lady were

under the seal of secrecy, as strict as that of confession, it rarely happened that the truth was discovered, and the authoress of the mischief exposed; and even when this did occur, who among this simple-minded people could follow the windings and turnings by which she slipped away from the accusation, and escaped like the wily snake, from the frozen fingers of the urchin who has caught him.

The house in which Mademoiselle Coste resided, stood near the summit of the hill on which the village was built. Vallerargues had formerly been a place of some strength and consequence, and in the troubles of the country, had presented its embattled walls to its friends and enemies. These, as well as the Castle formerly occupied by its ancient lords, were now partly in ruins, and the time-worn gates,

of no other use than to amuse the children who passed their play hours in swinging them to and fro, hung loosely on their mouldering hinges. In consequence however of this circumstance, the cottages were still much compressed within an enclosure, which was rendered sacred by the residence of many generations, and thus was the whole population brought more immediately under the view of this sharp-sighted Argus.

Without having studied mathematics, which at this period were not deemed an essential in female education, she knew the exact level at which to place the artillery of her eyes. Just at a due distance behind the worm-eaten green shutter was her chair set, and there like a skilful engineer she watched the enemy through the loopholes, remaining herself in perfect security within the entrenchment.

Nor was she destitute of skirmishers, often sent out to procure intelligence. Two or three of the idlest and silliest maid servants in the place found great delight in entertaining her with the passing occurrences; these she affected to despise, wondering that they could think her interested in such low gossip; but scarcely had she hurried them away, than her lean throat was stretched out to its utmost length, to obtain a more perfect view than the aforesaid loopholes could afford, and it was in this attitude, a snuffy handkerchief spread on her knees, the ready pinch between her finger and thumb, her greasy coiffe scarcely covering her still more greasy locks, an old cloak of coloured calico flung round her shoulders, and her feet slipped into a pair of dirty sabots, over stockings which called in vain for the service of the needle,

that Leah Coste the following morning saw Monsieur le Pasteur leave his own house, to which he had returned late the preceding night, walking, as was his custom when much engaged in thought, with his hands crossed behind his back, his cane under his arm, and his hat slouched over his eyes, and proceed, without even noticing the salutations of the individuals of the flock whose doors he passed, to the cottage now occupied by Madame Durand. Here was a subject for meditation to Mademoiselle Coste, if meditation that can be called, which consisted of a medley of reverie and soliloquy, not however sufficiently audible to be intelligible to those who might be near: she had already projected her visit, and this was an opportunity not to be resisted of at least enjoying the pleasure of interrupting a conversation that might possibly

be interesting. Concealing, therefore, as much of her untidiness as her slender wardrobe would permit, she sallied forth in pursuit of the Pastor, who, had he been aware of her intention, would doubtless have turned his steps another way, and forgone any pleasure that was to be accompanied with such a drawback.

CHAPTER II.

Whatever farce the boastful tyrant plays,
Virtue alone has majesty in death,
And greater still the more the tyrant frowns.
YOUNG.

MONSIEUR LA PORTE, who was now peaceably permitted to exercise the pastoral office over the Protestants of Vallerargues, had been educated in the severe school of adversity, a bitter, though a sure instructress. His life had resembled one of those stormy autumnal days in which, though the tempest is lulled as evening advances, yet the setting sun gleams faintly on the ground that is covered with the wrecks of its violence.

His father had exercised the same

sacred duties during a period when religious bigotry would scarcely allow the French Protestant the quiet possession of the wide desert for a temple, and for a call to worship, the howling of wolves and the screams of birds of prey. The certainty that he was signing his own death-warrant, while performing his important functions in defiance of edicts and statutes, caused no hesitation in the firm soul of this man of God, but, on the contrary, served rather to animate a zeal which had so short a day to work in.

Wherever he could assemble a congregation, his solemn yet beseeching voice was heard, exhorting, counselling, and comforting; wherever death claimed his prey, he was near at hand, to point the sinking soul to that Cross where alone the *monster* can be disarmed of his sting, and to console the afflicted mourners with

the assured hope of Redemption by Christ. As a pilgrim on earth, he wandered incessantly amongst the steep fastnesses of the country, making the abodes of sorrow his home, yet, at the same time, careful not to give any pretext for persecution by attracting the notice of his enemies. Was it possible for such a man to have enemies? Vain question! since darkness will always be opposed to light.

The rigorous edict of 1724, which denounced the pains of death equally on those ministers who continued to reside and hold assemblies in the country, and those who attempted to leave it, had not long been promulgated, and the fiend of persecution often vindicated her privilege by the immolation of some illustrious victim. Whom could she fix on whose death would be more likely than that of La Porte to spread desolation around?

Whose loss would probably occasion such a relaxation of discipline, such an overflow of grief, such a spread of ignorance, and torpor of indifference? His friends urged him to fly; but it was dangerous to seek flight in company with his wife and child, and to La Porte impossible without them.

To cease from his duties, or feign compliance with the reigning superstitions, was still more so: one only way remained, and the champion of the Faith pursued it as a Christian and a man. Certain that in the event of his death his son would be torn from the guardianship of his mother, and placed in the hands of Roman Catholic instructors, his first care was to have him conveyed, in company with some other refugees, to Geneva, whither he vainly entreated the partner of all his joys and afflictions to seek also

a safe asylum. No! in the desert where in secrecy and apprehension the solemn vow had been pronounced which united them for time and for eternity, and where was now their last refuge, she determined to await whatever might befall, well aware that if to see him she loved and revered torn mercilessly from her was to be her fate, it was near him only that she could feel the force to sustain the blow.

Many weeks elapsed between the first alarm being given and the hand of power extending itself over its destined victim. This brief space La Porte employed in strengthening the faith, and brightening the hopes of those who still continued to follow him wherever he was obliged to wander. "Consider, my brethren," he would often say, "what is about to happen to me, as the immediate dispensation of our Heavenly Father. If he sent severe

sickness to summon me hence, I know you would grieve, for you love me, but you would not murmur; and can you not look beyond the arm of man—can you not see that the sword he wields is as much under the command of Almighty power, as the pestilence that walketh in darkness? You believe that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered; and can you ascribe such importance to the designs of your fellow-mortals, as to suspect that their weak vengeance can stop for a moment the workings of this ever-watchful Providence. Rather lament for them than for me; pity them even for the power which is delegated to them for a season, since for all these things there is a reckoning to be made; and let us pray, not that the will of the Lord be left undone, but that he will have mercy on those who are blindly working what will bring

down destruction on themselves. Yes! while we acknowledge how much we stand in need of chastening, let us pray for our persecutors."

Touched by his example and his words, the whole assembly knelt around him; and it was in this attitude, with his hands clasped, his eyes streaming with tears of love and compassion, and his voice uttering the words of supplication, that La Porte was seized by the military, and conveyed, amidst the sighs and groans of his afflicted people, to Montpellier, accompanied by one who knew no other path in this world but to follow his footsteps.

His trial was short, as he had been taken in the very act of rebellion, and his execution immediately followed. At the foot of the scaffold a female was observed, her tearless eyes fixed on what was passing, but with such inexpressible agony

in her countenance as drew the attention even of the pretended ministers of justice.

"What are you doing here," cried a serjeant who was bustling to and fro to restrain the impatience of the mob—"you belong to these vile fanatics too, I suppose? Come, let's have a little of your psalmody."

"I am *his* wife," she replied, in a voice scarcely audible. The answer silenced all who overheard it; and a benevolent sister of charity considering only her affliction, led her into the hospital, where she lived but till the sound of the drums and the rush of people returning through the streets announced that all was over!

The young La Porte heard of the fate of his parents with deeper and more lasting sorrow than is usually felt at his age. He was received at Geneva by an old friend of his father's; but the parental

love he had enjoyed for ten years of his life could not be made up to him, even had his new guardian united more of Christian charity to his Christian zeal.

This man was an elder of the Genevan church, protecting and assisting his persecuted brethren from principle, and affording a strong proof of the power of Christianity, even in bending the most stubborn wills; as he was so devoid of natural feeling, that if he had not been a Christian, he must have been a Misanthrope. But to a boy of warm feelings this want of tenderness was a severe trial; and while he expressed and felt himself grateful, his gratitude was the effort of duty, not the spontaneous tribute of the heart.

No allowances were made by his guardian for youth—none for natural disposition. The Genevan elder seldom wasted time in minute inquiry: he drew

a perfectly straight line of duty, on each side of which lay a host of pains and penalties that seized on the luckless wight who might chance, from whatever temptation, to transgress. He treated those under his control as he did his time-pieces (for he was a watchmaker of some skill), and could no more tolerate an error in the conduct of the one than in the machinery of the other; forgetting that man's actions do not move upon wheels and pivots, and that his virtues are not the result of mere instinct, but the effect of much exertion, and of many humbling false steps. Besides this, it was now so common in Geneva to meet with refugee orphans and pennyless confessors of the Faith, that the sympathy which (to our shame be it spoken) novelty so powerfully excites was becoming cold; and after those who heard of La Porte's misfortunes had de-

clared it was very sad indeed, they contented themselves with hoping he was properly grateful for the good fortune he had met with—that he would be docile, work hard, and not burden his kind benefactor longer than necessity compelled him.

In youth such an incentive to diligence is not very powerful, because the young mind rarely feels the weight of dependence, or has a more exalted idea of independence, than that it consists in liberty to follow one's own devices. However, La Porte amply fulfilled their directions, and studied school divinity and logic at the college with a diligence that excited great admiration in the Consistory, who failed not to prognosticate his future eminence as a scholar. How far he was stimulated to exertion by the hope of being able to provide, at some future period, for the

daughter of his friend, the watchmaker, from whose eyes he had learnt another lesson than those taught by the Professor's, we do not pretend to say; but after a courtship suited in length to the lives of the patriarchs, and which the worthy father required to accustom himself to the idea of a marriage in the family, they were happily united; and giving up all other prospects, at the call of many who had known and valued his father, La Porte returned to his native country under somewhat happier auspices; for though the Protestants had as yet no legal right to inhale the breath of heaven, the spirit of persecution slumbered, and the gradual spread of more liberal ideas was preparing the minds of men to acknowledge the ties of brotherhood, amidst all the distinctions of sect and party.

The disposition with which he set out

in life exhibited a strange mixture of the warmth and tenderness he had received as a paternal inheritance, choked by the effects of an education in bondage, yet marked by a principle of true piety, derived from a higher source than the starts of natural feeling or the doctrinal lore conveyed by human teachers. Hence he sympathised with those who suffered, as having himself been a sufferer; and when the vicious called for his pastoral rebukes, as a man, he reproved with pain, though as the shepherd of the flock he did it with firmness: but if a decline from discipline, however slight, and too frequent during those days of relaxation, or an opinion broached in conversation approached within the verge of heterodoxy, then he prepared himself for the contest; his lips were compressed—his chin, his eye-brows knit,—and the village pastor

seemed for a time to be transformed into a combatant in the arena of theological controversy.

Controversy was however a rare treat to M. la Porte. His wife and daughter had been convinced over and over again; and seldom could his utmost address provoke them to utter a dissenting word, except, indeed, when he threw out a doubt of the clearness of his honoured father-in-law's views on certain points, which never failed to draw from Madame la Porte who had been educated in Spartan submission to her parents, a hint that it was a bad sign when scholars set themselves up for being wiser than their masters.

It is not material to add that his income was small: had it been larger, the surplus would only have enriched the poor. Rigid economy was a pleasure to the wife, a duty to the daughter, and a habit with the

husband, who would no more have thought of buying a new coat because the old was shabby, than he would have thought of discarding an old servant on account of his grey hairs.

Such was the man conversing with Mademoiselle Durand, when Mademoiselle Coste, in fulfilment of her abovementioned scheme, stole softly up the stairs, and with gentle footstep approached the apartment where they sat. But whether her usual acuteness was at fault, or that the lady and the Pastor were well practised in the arts of deception, it is certain their countenances betrayed no embarrassment at her abrupt knock, nor indeed could the subject of their conversation, which turned on a female servant Madame la Porte had recommended, afford much gratification to her curiosity; the important point was discussed and happily settled

before Mademoiselle Coste had time to relate all she knew that was reprehensible in the girl's character, and Madame Durand after such civilities to her new guest as politeness required, proceeded to make some inquiries respecting the state of the village.

"It is not very flourishing, I grieve to say," replied Mons. la Porte, "since the loss of our late Seigneur, and that indeed is a loss; some fatality seems to have attended us, and between sickness and want of employment, I hardly think, Madam, you will find more distress in any part of the province."

"You are always bringing up your late lord, Mons. la Porte," said Mademoiselle Coste, "and it is very easy for you to praise him, for the good man has been gone so long it's quite out of my power to contradict you; but I am sure

it's a bad compliment to the present lord, who, though he may not be quite so favourable to your party as you could desire, is possessed of as many virtues as will make a saint of him after his death."

"My good Madam," replied La Porte, "comparisons are never pleasant, and as to the intolerance of the Prior of St. Hoc which you speak of, far be it from me, to judge whether it proceed from mistaken though honest zeal, or be the effect of blind prejudice and active malice. The Searcher of hearts can alone decide; but surely you will agree with me in saying, much misery meets us at every step; and perhaps you will give me credit when I assure you, it could not exist under the Baron de Courcy, who living on the spot made it his business to search out and prevent any distress that the hand or

heart of man could relieve. It must of course be different when only a deputy resides among us."

"Some people," said Mademoiselle Coste, with an indignant toss of the head, "see every thing with a jaundiced eye; but no later than yesterday my cousin, Mons. Vidal, declared to me, that if the poor complained, it was only because they had a habit of it, and that they were too well fed and treated for their condition."

"That must indeed be a wretched state," replied La Porte, "that makes complaint habitual with a class of men whose spirits are so proverbially elastic, and who, like children, forget their sorrows as soon as they are past. But I will not dispute the point with a person, who must be so well informed as Mons. Vidal on the subject, at least if we may

judge by the number of supplicants always surrounding his door."

"My cousin," replied Mademoiselle Coste, laying great emphasis on the word, "is indeed overburdened with his charity."

"It is a load," said La Porte, smiling, "that we can easily get rid of by dispensing it to others."

"Is the Vidal you speak of, a native of this place?" asked Madame Durand.

"Of that I am not certain," replied he, "but my neighbour can inform you better. He was formerly much in the confidence of the Baron de Courcy, and is now, I believe, still more so, in that of the Prior, his brother-in-law. Some men are so fortunate as to be thus able to disengage themselves when all sinks around them, and seem to have a sort of instinct in judging of a falling house."

Madame Durand seemed much struck

with what he said, but Mademoiselle Coste, engrossed with her anger against the Pastor, who often expressed his dislike to Vidal with too little circumspection, now commenced a justification of her cousin's conduct, with an eagerness which he would have been the first to censure as indiscreet, so well are persons of his description aware that silence is generally the best policy. Mons. la Porte had heard her reasonings too often to be much moved by them, and the enraged damsel finding how little impression she made on either of her auditors, soon withdrew, with the kind intention of repeating this just attack, to incense Vidal's mind against the Pastor.

"You never mentioned in your letters, my good friend," said Madame Durand, as soon as she perceived that Mademoiselle Coste was quite out of hearing,

"that this wretch was now triumphing in the fruits of that villany which ought to have brought him to ruin."

"It was useless," replied La Porte, "for though I knew him thoroughly and could unmask many of his deeds of blackness, yet those who upheld him are not less well informed than I am, and yet do not withdraw their support. I should merely have occasioned you useless pain."

"And would it be impossible to move him?" said Madame Durand; "is there no hope of bringing him at least to confess what became of that dear child, whose disappearance has always seemed so mysterious?"

"Impossible!" cried La Porte, "he is dead to every feeling, and acknowledges no influence but that of ambition and avarice, which will rule him to his death-

bed—he is already sold to the highest bidder. On the day that the death of the young Bann was publicly announced, I met Vidal. We had seldom spoke, but he then came up to me with an eagerness that appeared extraordinary, relating many particulars by way of authenticating his decease, and boasting of the honour the Prior had conferred in appointing him to superintend the obsequies, which, on account of the infant's dying out of the pale of the church, were to be performed with privacy. The body was laid in the vault of the chapel of St. Roc. I wondered much at these explications, as I was then almost a stranger to him, but no suspicion entered my mind until the vague rumours were set afloat, which I mentioned to the Baron in several of my late letters. Since that I have conquered my repugnance so far as to question him re-

specting them, but he treats them with contempt, and turns off the discourse abruptly; which I should rather fear, proceeds from his unwillingness to be reminded of the reason he has for knowing them to be false. From the period of the child's death, I have never been able to meet with his nurse, or her reverend father; but their departure from their former abode is, you know, Madam, easily accounted for by their own misfortunes. Mons. Vidal has been lately raised to the office of Consul in this village, and is a ready tool in the hand of power; but it is whispered that he seeks by his complaisance a higher reward, and that notwithstanding an affectation of disdain for those around them, he would not be sorry to find himself removed far from a scene where he is so well known."

"May his wish be soon accomplished,"

said Madame Durand: "it sometimes makes the heart sink to see how firmly they seem to stand whose foundation is laid in oppression, and how long their day lasts."

"We cannot call it long, my dear Madam," replied La Porte; "the true duration of time is not known till we look back upon it; it is then only our years lose that fictitious extent which impatience or hope always give to them. This man's career will appear short indeed to him when all his crimes are crowded at once into his remembrance, and the vengeance which seems now to tarry, descends with the swiftness of the thunderbolt."

Madame Durand acquiesced in his sentiments, and after inquiring some further particulars of the Consul's conduct which filled her with horror, Mons. la Porte took his leave, with a promise of returning

with his wife and daughter as soon as they should be recovered from the fatigues of their journey.

Meanwhile the indefatigable Leah Coste hurried along to her cousin's house, equally regardless of the sly looks of those who guessed her destination, and the reception which at that busy hour of the day she might possibly meet with. The office of Consul of the village, answering to that of Mayor, (the title at present in use,) did not demand from its possessors much parade or pomp of appearance, or the least change in their habits of life. Though sometimes exercised by persons of high respectability, and some rank in society, occasional recourse was had in an emergency to those, who besides the qualifications of reading and writing, with the accomplishment of understanding French, though still speaking the favourite

Patois dialect, had nothing more to boast of than a servile deference to those in power, and a readiness to carry into the minute concerns of a small community the same system of bigotry and oppression that is sometimes seen in the government of the province.

The late consul, who was found untractable, had been displaced by the prior of St. Roc, to make way for Monsieur Vidal; but whether this favour was a reward for services he had already rendered, or a bribe for those to come, was a disputed point, though one of little consequence, as Vidal was not likely to stop short in the career that led to the gratification of his wishes, whatever might be the price to be paid.

There were, however, troubles attending on his situation, that sometimes discomposed his countenance; and this very

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

morning, in a temper not the most propitious, he had been giving audience to a host of vassals defective in their rents—cottagers unequal to the payment of the disme, or lax in fulfilling the corvée due to their lord, all bringing such undeniable proofs of poverty and misery, that he could not but feel it was like pressing flint-stones for wine; and the sending a few of the half-starved and meagre wretches to gaol was rather from impatient rage at the sight of his empty leather bags, than from an expectation that the severity would succeed in filling them.

The crowd at length dispersed, some in hopeless despair, to find a dungeon scarcely less miserable than their homes, others to wait their turn on a future day: officers of justice swearing—women weeping—old men venting their feelings in low murmurs—the young provoking opposi-

tion by loud invectives, which the more prudent in vain endeavoured to silence, turned away, and the man of business was left to his meditation, seated at his inky desk, the floor spread with account-books, papers, manifestoes, arrêts de conseil, and lists of offenders; and near his feet a large chafing dish of hot embers, which kept up a genial warmth in the apartment, and served to light his pipe whenever an intricate case called for the fumes of tobacco to brighten his intellects.

He was dressed in a loose cassock of coarse moultan, originally brown, but which time had enlivened with a reddish hue: on his head was a blue nightcap, relieving the duty of a well-curled wig that hung in readiness beside him, against the arrival of visitors of more than usual consequence. His features were sharp, with angular cheek-bones, and bushy grey

eyebrows that almost concealed the little eyes sunk beneath them. His complexion was sallow, and seemed to assume a deeper tinge as he counted the heaps of silver before him, and sighed to reflect how much more respectable they were in bulk than in value.

The consul, however, was not quite alone; for in the doorway that led to the kitchen, scarcely conscious himself in which room he actually was, so undecided was he rendered by his fear of intruding, stood a little figure, often passed by in a crowd, but which, if once noticed, was not easily forgotten. This was Simon Chas, the "valet de villé," an officer whose duties are multifarious and important, and bear some analogy to those of our town-criers and bellmen.

Though Simon was not absolutely deformed, he was frequently suspected of

being so, from an unaccountable awkwardness of gait and appearance, differing extremely from his usually well-made and agile countrymen. His knees rather projected from the perpendicular ; his head was more than commonly large, and so set between his shoulders as to deter him from the exertion of frequently looking up to those who in height towered much above him. Add to this a vacant countenance, and it will not be matter of surprise if he passed current for one but half-witted. Whether he was careless of the world's opinion, and purposely suffered his wisdom to work behind the mask of folly, by an ungoverned license of speech and action he rather strengthened the idea, which an occasional shrewdness did not wholly dissipate. He was supposed to be much in the consul's favour, and even acquainted

with some of his secrets; but as he never revealed any, it is probable he had forgotten them, as his memory very nearly resembled a sieve, and "*forget* and forgive" was his most appropriate motto.

Simon had, strange as it may appear, contrived to captivate a woman of sense enough for them both; some, indeed, wisely conjectured, that she took him for her better half, principally with a view to keeping her powers of command from rusting by disuse.

It was somewhat amusing to see the air of authority with which he paraded the streets when any proclamation called for the exercise of his talents on a cracked trumpet, that might have served for a mountebank or travelling quack doctor, seconding its ominous sound with the cry of "De la part du Roi et de Monsieur le

Consul!" contrasted with the subdued air with which he returned to his humble abode, to rock the cradle and receive from his termagant partner a wholesome lecture on his conduct during the day.

So matters stood when Monsieur Vidal, as he was sliding a few crowns into a private drawer, heard a low muttering of voices in the kitchen. It was Mademoiselle Coste, who had entered with the accustomed familiarity of the country, and was making herself entertaining to the servant girl, while she sat on a broken stool, with the bellows, in the eagerness of listening, pointed to empty air. "Who's there?" exclaimed the consul, gruffly.

Simon turned towards the kitchen fire, not so much to see who it was, as to catch what answer he was to give.

"Who's there?" again repeated the

consul, in a voice that made the girl blow with a vehemence which threatened the bellows with destruction.

" It's only Perrette and Mademoiselle Coste, Sir," at length replied Simon.

" Only who?" cried the consul.

" Only me," said the lady, in an insinuating tone—" only me, cousin; and if you're busy"——

" Busy! I'm always busy, and it would be well if you were so too," he added, in a lower voice, but which Mademoiselle Coste, who now stood with Simon on the threshold, but too well overheard.

" I'm sure I am busy," she replied, somewhat piqued; " but there's no business I would not leave to give you pleasure, though this is the return I meet with; and I am sure I thought it would give you pleasure to hear of a visit I made

this morning, where I took your part against Monsieur la Porte and the lady who is just come to the village; but I am sorry to see I am mistaken, and I may go as I came."

Vidal, though he always feared some mischief would ensue when his reputation was thus defended, was yet unwilling to displease her. "Come, come," he cried, "friends must not be so touchy; I am always, you know, glad to see you, my dear cousin, but this morning I have been a little hurried: so many affairs as I have on my hands are enough to make a man forget himself, and offend against the rules of politeness: a little of your society will dissipate my ill-humour.—So you have called on the stranger,—always the first to do what is proper; I have some thoughts of calling myself."

"If you do," said Mademoiselle Coste,

"you may chance to meet with an old acquaintance, for she seemed to me to know you."

There was something a little sarcastic in her manner, that served to show she had not forgotten, in the civility of his last speech, the wish expressed in that under tone, which is never used but to express the truth.

"To know me!" he exclaimed—"I wonder how or where; but won't you be seated?" and perceiving that she was retreating into the kitchen, he brushed off the dust from an arm-chair that was always known as her favourite place, adding, "you must come in,—I have something very particular to say to you.—Simon, you may go for the present, and return to me as soon as vespers are over;—shut the door after you."

As the lady advanced Simon withdrew,

but whether he retired farther than the kitchen fire those in the parlour were too much engaged to perceive, and it is certain he also had there a favourite seat, where he was secure from the reprimands that usually awaited him at home.

" And who is the lady, and what have you to tell me?" were uttered in the same breath by Vidal to Mademoiselle Coste; but as the wish to communicate was at least as strong in her bosom as the desire to listen, she informed him of what had passed at Madame Durand's without loss of time, not even sparing his feelings the least iota of Monsieur la Porte's remarks, and concluded by hinting that he would not have expressed himself thus to a total stranger in the country.

Vidal, though he seldom admitted that any possessed talents besides himself, had often remarked in his cousin a great

shrewdness of observation, the result of constant practice and the want of all other occupation, just as one sense becomes more perfect from the absence of another. In the present instance he was glad to catch at any information respecting a person, whose arrival at Vallerargues excited considerable surprise; and his own time being pretty much engaged, thought nothing more suitable than bestowing the office of spy on his dear cousin, which was at once affording her a gratification and an honour, as he gave her to understand that the alarming reports which had been spread about the country rendered the movements of every stranger matter of consequence.

"Now, my dear cousin," he continued, "it is more useful for me that you should find out whether this is not some cunning Protestant refugee returned without per-

mission, than that you should repeat that old fox's lies either to myself or others; and if you bring me intelligence of any moment, you may be sure of a handsome reward for your pains."

"To be sure," cried the damsel, endeavouring to look persuasive; "a little cash is seldom unacceptable, and I am hard driven at this moment."

"Well, well," said Vidal, "there is no harm in a foretaste," and he slipped a crown into her hand, which was gratefully received and pocketed.

After a moment's pause, she drew her chair a little closer in, saying, "I'm quite ready now for what you have to tell me."

"I wish I was too," thought Vidal, as he inwardly cursed the woman's curiosity and his own want of invention at such a pinch; but his mind was otherwise engaged, and there is no knowing how long

Mademoiselle Coste might have sat in breathless expectation, if, fortunately for the poor consul, the door had not been opened by Father Saturnine, a brother from the priory of St. Roc, who intimated to the consul that he was immediately to accompany him to the Prior. Vidal joyfully sprung up—secured about his person the bags of silver, which he knew would make his presence more agreeable—took down his wig, and left the room to change his dress for one more suited to an equestrian expedition, whispering in the disconsolate lady's ear, by way of consolation, that he would on his return that evening give her a full account of his visit, and relate all the intelligence he should gain.

CHAPTER III.

At length they chanced to meet upon the way
An aged sire, in long black weeds yclad;
His feet all bare, his beard all hoary graie,
And by his belt his book he hanging had;
Sober he seemed, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent.
SPENSER'S *Fairy Queen.*

ON the evening of the same day, Madame Durand perceived a crowd gathered before her house, and desiring her maid to inquire into the cause, seated herself at the window that looked to the street till her return. After some time, she perceived that they were surrounding a poor man, who lay stretched on the ground, and gave no other signs of life than a few convulsive sobs. He appeared aged, and his long grey hairs streamed over his

shrivelled hands, which were fast clenched against his forehead. Some looked on him with sympathy; others, by a strange perversion, were amused at the scene; and a noisy troop of children, in defiance of the endeavours of Simon to drive them away, were mocking the unhappy wretch.

A young man, of very interesting appearance, supported his head, and endeavoured to check the troublesome curiosity of the lookers on.

"It's of no use," exclaimed an old tottering dame—"it's all over with the poor creature at last: I thought he could not hold out long, and it's not before his time, for he's the leavings of many a race, I warrant. Where's Simon, who should take care and prevent people from dying in the highway, before our very eyes?"

"Where I ought to be," replied Simon; "but as for hindering people from dying

where their fancy takes them, I don't see it belongs to my office: besides, neighbour Susanne, I dare say he'd not object to your house, if you'd be so kind as to take him in; and you may still have some of the cordial left that made your two husbands go off so easy, peace to their memory."

"Where did you learn that, you impertinent fellow?" cried the dame.

"It's hard to say," replied Simon, "when it's in every body's mouth."

"Come," said Mademoiselle Coste, who was watching the road leading to the priory, "let's have no quarrelling. If this good woman has a few cures for the sick, and they don't always succeed, the fault may not be her's. It was no bad plan to try them on what belonged to herself first. But what will the consul say to all this, when he comes back?"

"What, indeed," said Simon. "However, he'll not pass here in a hurry, I'm thinking."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the lady, a little alarmed.

"Why," replied Simon, "that just now he's seated snugly at supper, which generally fixes him for a good hour; and that I brushed his best beaver and doublet, and rubbed his pistols bright; which looks rather like a journey for to-morrow than to-night. Moreover, he has commanded me to have his mule in readiness at daylight."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Coste.

"Perhaps so," replied Simon, drily; "that's just what my wife says, when she hears any thing she doesn't like; but I never found it altered the matter."

Mademoiselle Coste hurried off to as-

certain if the information were correct, and many followed, eager to receive the same assurance.

Moved with compassion, and finding her maid had forgotten her commission, Madame Durand, after concealing her face as much as possible with her veil, descended into the road, to beg the poor creature might be brought into her house, in the hope that her care would yet restore him. The young man who knelt by him, lifted the stranger from the ground, and carried him away from the listening spectators, who, a little ashamed on Madame Durand's appearance, soon entirely dispersed. Nor were Simon's efforts wanting to quicken their movements. "Home, home, good people," he cried, "don't you know I'm the Consul's representative, and am to be obeyed."

"You, indeed," cried one woman, "yes,

about as much as the stick he puts his old coat on, to frighten away the crows."

"If we don't mind you, Simon," exclaimed another, "you'll send your wife to us, won't you?"

Allusions of this kind were, for obvious reasons, rather painful to poor Simon's ears, so he retired quietly to his house, forced to this humbling conclusion, that without his trumpet he was no match for the imperious dames of Vallerargues.

The stranger meanwhile was gently placed by a blazing fire in Madame Durand's kitchen, the light from which fell strongly on his pallid face; he could not be less than eighty, yet, though wan and wrinkled, and his countenance overspread with the hue of death, it was one that irresistibly excited the attention. Itwas not merely from the look of misery com-

mon to all in distress, and which simply awakens our pity—strong conflicting passions appeared to have been marked there, and to have worn deeper furrows than those made by time. He was clothed in a loose upper garment of coarse dark stuff, decorated round the neck with scollop shells, which served to indicate that he was a mendicant Pilgrim; such a character is not uncommon in that country, even in the present day of light and improvement, since at the fairs and markets they take their regular stand with the mountebank, and barter toys and pictures, hallowed by the touch of a relic, for the hard-earned pence of the artisan and labourer. A scrip was fastened by a leather belt over one shoulder, a scanty black cloak hung behind, and on his head he wore an old broad-leafed hat, also ornamented with shells. A long white

beard fell almost to his girdle. In one of his hands, which now hung powerless by his side, was a staff, terminating in a cross, and surmounted by the image of his patron Saint, and a rosary of large beads suspended from his girdle, affixed to which were a profusion of small shells, relics, and crosses.

Madame Durand quickly perceived that the poor man was only exhausted by the violent struggles of a long fit, and after employing the proper means to restore animation, quietly waited their effect. A deep groan at length seemed to relieve his bosom, and to restore suspended circulation to his veins. He opened his large blue eyes, and fixed them first on the young man, who still supported him, and then on Madame Durand, who, forgetting all wish of concealment, in her charitable exertions, had thrown her veil back, and

was now leaning over him. He passed his hand over his brow, as if to clear his sight; then looked again, and a universal tremour shook his aged frame.

"Oh, he's going off again," whispered the maid, "there's death in his face, we shall never save him."

Madame Durand assured her it was not uncommon after such an attack, and addressing herself to the old man, begged him not to be uneasy, for he should want for nothing it was in her power to bestow.

"That voice of kindness, too," exclaimed the Pilgrim, listening as if to catch some uncertain sound that floated in the air near him, "yet it cannot be; all who were kind to me are gone, like the bright colours of the setting sun, and I am left to linger on in darkness. It is a hard lot, but what matter, for the few moments my life has to run? I must be gone," he

continued, after a pause, during which his lips moved, though no sound was heard, "this is no place for me," and he attempted to rise, but his feeble limbs refused to support his weight, and he sunk again on the chair exhausted by the effort.

Madame Durand, finding it vain to persuade him to remain during the night, inquired where were his friends, to whose care he might be consigned.

"In the grave," was his reply. "No one seeks after useless, withered branches, except for the burning;" nor would he permit of any other arrangement, than that Isidore, the young man who assisted him, and who seemed well to understand his turn of mind, should accompany him on his way to his night's residence.

With some hesitation, Isidore inquired if they had far to go.

"And what is that to you," said the old

man, sternly, "does your kindness depend on miles and furlongs? And do you think I am to say in such and such a spot I dwell, that every vagabond may come and claim fellowship with me. It is easier to track the wolf to its den, than me to my cover."

Isidore professed his willingness to attend him without question, only first begging permission to inform a person who expected him of his going.

The old man smiled scornfully. "I will spare you some pains. Ascend the rock of the fountain, and I am much mistaken if you find not those you seek there before you."

Isidore coloured, and promising to return immediately, left the room.

Madame Durand found herself alone with the Pilgrim, who, leaning his face against his hands, sat with his eyes im-

movably fixed on her. To divert him from his scrutiny, she inquired if he were well acquainted with the young man who had shown him so much kindness.

"I know little harm of him, lady," replied the Pilgrim, "and he bears a fair character. They say he is a dutiful son to a tender mother, that he gives away what he has not sense enough to keep, that he is gentle as a lamb to his friends, but bold as a lion when any are oppressed. Poor praise, methinks! But he has not been tried; if he cannot bear the petty provocations of a peasant's life, he must be weak indeed. The buzzing of a fly may teaze an unbroken colt, but the generous lion disregards it. I could tell him of trials that it would make his hair stand on end but to hear."

"We are not all called to experience them," said Madame Durand.

"And when we are called," he replied, "do we listen? do we not turn from the combat, and sooner lay down in the street, for the oppressor to tread on us, than stand up and face him? I know this well, for I have been among the base ones, and how I have been punished for it, those who held the scourge could best tell."

Madame Durand, though far from yielding easily to womanish fears, was a little alarmed at the wildness of his discourse, and with the idea of fixing his roving imagination, asked some questions relative to his past life, and the variety of scenes which his dress indicated him to have witnessed.

"Yes, lady," he replied, "I have wandered and suffered during more than the usual span of man's existence, and now I am left to do the work I neglected in my early days."

"Were you born in this country?" said Madame Durand.

"In the mountains," he replied, "but I left them when young; it was the temptation of the evil one, and I have never prospered since. Turks, Jews, and Christians, all have tried their malice upon me; and if I attempted to complain, *he* was always at my ear to whisper it was no more than I deserved. Even when he brings me to the edge of the grave, and I long to lay down on that cold and quiet bed, he snatches me back, and my torment is to begin again."

"And have you never," said Madame Durand, "applied to the holy men of your religion for their prayers and counsel?"

The pilgrim bent his head towards the ground, and in a low voice replied, "No holy place must I enter—no prayer may I offer, nor partake of any sacred rites. I

am a sinful man, and till the sign of reprobation is taken off from me, I must wander round the fold without presuming to seek shelter within. The discipline of the church is severe; but they are mad who prefer their sins to their safety." After a silence of some length, he continued—"Isidore tarries long—I must away."

"You appeared," said Madame Durand, "so well aware of his business, that you can easily judge how long it will detain him."

"Business!" cried the old man—"I said not business, Lady; 'twas a fool's errand, and common rules apply not to such follies. Troubles come not thick enough for the young—they must needs go in search of them. He is poor, and wishes one to share his poverty; he is friendless, and cannot be satisfied without

making himself enemies, and he has done it too."

"Explain yourself," said Madame Durand—"you forget that I am a stranger in this country."

"If you are," cried the old man, significantly, "remain such to malicious eyes, for they can see through many disguises. But for the young man.—In my youth I was told a woman, like a skilful physician, could tell the patient's disorder from his looks. If you examined him well you might have seen, from his colourless cheek—his heavy eye—his care-worn brow, that he thinks himself in love,—a remediless disease; but if there is a being on earth who has influence over him, let him be checked in that career which crosses one who never forgave an injury, or suffered it to go unrevenged."

The entrance of Isidore prevented the

questions Madame Durand was still anxious to put; and the pilgrim, whose mental wanderings seemed only connected with some painful remembrances, took leave with much solemnity, and leaning on the arm of his young conductor, quitted the village.

For some time they continued their way in silence; and as the night approached, and every object was gradually veiled in darkness, each appeared to be sunk in deep meditation, though it was evident, from the keen glances that the pilgrim from time to time cast upon his companion, that he formed the subject of his thoughts. Their road wound in a gentle ascent, amongst hills of bare grey granite, which rose on each side in wild fantastic shapes, giving unbounded scope to the imagination. Sometimes they resembled the time-worn ruins of an ancient

fortress, with its mouldering battlements and yawning portals; at others, they rose in pyramids of immense height, or in broad perpendicular masses, seeming like the walls and bastions of a strongly fortified city. In their crevices the evergreen oak displayed its unfading verdure, either like a tufted fringe skirting the immense masses, or, where deeper chasms afforded more freedom of vegetation, rising with its usual luxuriance, and clothing the rocks even to their very summits. A few wild fowl, uttering their dismal cry as they winged their way to their distant nests, and a stream almost too narrow to be seen, but whose noise was increased as it dashed over the stones that impeded its passage to the vale, were the only sounds heard; and when at length the moon, in unclouded majesty, rose from behind the grey cliffs, no living objects were to be

seen but the two lonely travellers, whose appearance suited well with the wildness of the place. That of the Pilgrim has been already described. Isidore, still in the prime of youth, was somewhat above the common size, but possessing all the grace and agility that are the result of health and vigour. His complexion was dark, and his features could not boast the regularity which might do credit to the sculptor's skill; but the intelligent painter would not have desired a finer study than his expressive hazel eye, smooth brow, and mouth, whose ready smile was indicative of cheerful gaiety and open-hearted generosity. His dress was that of the peasants of the country; his scrip and hautboy hung by his side, and round his waist he wore a worked scarlet sash, wrapped in several folds. There was something commanding in his whole ap-

pearance which his associates could not withstand, and which they looked on as a presage of future elevation; and though far from affecting superiority, he unconsciously practised a condescension of manner that can rarely be exercised among the poor. Nor was there wanting the admiration of many a village belle to intoxicate the head of the handsome shepherd; but his coldness proved as formidable a shield as the ægis of Minerva. It is, however, possible, that their complaints showed rather that he could not change, than that he could not feel.

Whatever was the subject of Isidore's reflections, it did not appear to convey unmixed pleasure to his mind, and after some time, apparently spent in endeavouring to chase the obtrusive ideas that presented themselves, finding the old man persisted in his silence, he began to

breathe softly on his hautboy the notes of a favourite romance.

The Pilgrim frowned and shook his head.—"Young man," he at length exclaimed, "is the time never to come when you will lay aside all childish amusements, and prepare for the duties of life? I have watched you long, and grieve to see you only lay down one folly to take up another, and that when you should be ready for my summons, you are listening to every idle fancy that woman or child can amuse you with."

"Father," replied Isidore, "your rebuke is severe, speak but the word, and I am ready; but, truly, my thoughts are at this moment so uncompanionable that, finding you not disposed for conversation, I would fain try if my pipe could afford me more amusement."

"No jesting, boy!" cried the Pilgrim, angrily.

"Nay, father, I am far from such a thought," said Isidore, "but if you knew how painful reflection sometimes is, and what cause I have to feel it so——."

"If I knew," cried the Pilgrim, in a tone of bitter scorn. "But you are yet too weak to bear even the recital of what racks other men's minds. So you think you have cause to complain? Silly child! a cloud is before your sun, and you droop as if it was never to shine again. All this load of sorrow I can sum up in one word—you are poor!"

"There is much more, father," cried Isidore.

"Ay, ay, I forgot, there is more," said the Pilgrim, "you are proud."

"Proud!" exclaimed Isidore, while his

eyes kindled, before more tardy conscience had time to whisper, He is right.

"Yes," continued the Pilgrim, "you are proud, and to be poor and proud, and added to that to be in love, is enough to sink any man into despair. Listen to me. Your mother, young man, has often charged you to come to me for counsel, before you take any important step in life, and to this deference I am entitled, for I have watched you openly and in secret, with a care that would appear strange to the world. But what prognostic do you give that such a step will ever be taken. Tales and romances are your study, and a woman's distaff would best suit your fair and delicate hand."

Isidore was about to speak, but the old man imposing silence with a commanding air, thus continued—

"Your visits to the Pastor's I did not

prevent, for I thought you might derive the good he could impart, without imbibing the evil that was lurking near at hand. But the memory of threescore years is not very clear, and in indulging this hope, I had forgotten the weakness of my youth, and the power of a woman's smile. Besides, did you think you were born to be a bookworm, or that the prize I have held out to you was to be won by sophistical arguments and the idle intricacies of carnal learning? Are these pursuits, which become the well-fed, lazy drones of a convent, to be compared with the noble ambition which I would infuse into your breast? Remember, we do not live for ourselves alone, and that the call we are to listen to, is not that of our own deceitful fancy, but of our brethren in distress; nor must we sink into repose and inactivity till they can say,

'Enough, our wrongs are revenged, our hearts' desire is satisfied.' Shame on your trifling! Was it for this I confided to your ear a secret on which my safety and life depends? Was it for this I endeavoured to fill your heart with admiration for the deeds of the worthies of old, who have fought and suffered gloriously for our faith? The kindling of your eye deceived me; I thought, too, that I saw on your cheek the glow of emulation, the firm resolve to do or suffer like them; but no, it was the childish wonder of inexperience; a tale of fairies and necromancers would have made the same impression. Nor is it this alone I have to censure. Far from following my directions, with regard to a man whom it is now dangerous to provoke, you have by more than one act of folly drawn down his anger upon you, before you have a

right to despise it. Are you aware that you are thwarting Vidal in a pursuit that fills up whatever time he can spare from his avarice; and that though he feel not the power of love, he will rage under a disappointment with the violence of the fondest lover?"

"And who are you?" exclaimed Isidore, suddenly stopping short, and looking at the Pilgrim with indignation. "What claim have you to such an obedience? what right to scan my conduct with the scrutiny of a master? You are mistaken if you interpret my docility in trifles into a submission of all the conduct of my life to your control. I may have hitherto humoured your fancies, but I am neither to be threatened nor cajoled by you into courting the favour of one I look upon with contempt, or so much as abstaining from openly manifesting my sentiments towards him."

"Who am I!" repeated the Pilgrim, looking for a moment sternly at Isidore, and then taking off his large slouched hat, he shook back the long white hairs that hung over his face, as if the sight of its wrinkles should excite more respect in one so much his inferior in age. Then, after a considerable pause, he continued in a softer tone, "Young man, read my history in these furrows. I had a name, but it must not be coupled with disgrace. I had a country, friends, relations. I had one I loved so dearly that the strongest passion you can conceive, seems weak as scorching flax when compared with what I felt; and what I now am, you know—a wretch, for the finger of scorn to point at, and for him I most cherish to slight and contemn. May you never know the misery of dragging the load of years through a world peopled by strangers, and to look upon

every insult as your just reward. Pardon me, my son, I have been too hasty, we will leave it to another time. But as you value your own repose and honour, beware how you entangle yourself with friend or foe; but when the glorious moment arrives, let me find you free to fulfil your destiny."

This speech had the effect of calming Isidore's rising anger, and of making him ashamed of the irritability he had given way to. He held out his hand, which was received with pleasure, and a reconciliation speedily effected. Yet he knew not how to understand the mysterious expressions of his companion, and which he had hitherto regarded as the sallies of a disordered imagination, working upon warm affections, and which had no foundation in reality.

Isidore was the son of poor parents;

his father died when he was very young, and his widowed mother, looking upon him as her sole consolation in the season of her affliction, had not only loved him with the ardour of affection commonly felt for an only child, but had gone to the utmost limit of her means in procuring for him whatever advantages of education were within her reach. Some of the neighbours sneered at the learning bestowed upon the boy; but notwithstanding these advantages, they soon found that he toiled as constantly for his mother, and obeyed her with as much docility, as if his evenings were spent at cards and in dancing, instead of reading. During his childhood, Father Bernardine paid frequent visits to the village of Vallerargues, and, either struck with his intelligent countenance, or indulging, as some imagined, the hope of making a proselyte of

one so well calculated to do honour to his care, generally fixed himself in Madeleine's cottage during his stay; and her hospitality was the more readily bestowed when she found that during these visits he communicated much instruction to Isidore, relating the wonders he had met with during his eventful life, and which were eagerly gathered by a mind which thirsted with ardour for information.

Whether Madeleine treated the suspicion of his design as idle gossip, or felt firm in her faith, which was that of the persecuted sect of Protestants, the villagers could not discover, though great pains was taken to do so.

Their whispers, however, alarmed the zeal of M. la Porte for these members of his flock. For some years past, the fits to which the Pilgrim was subject became more frequent, and his restlessness so

great, that he came rarely to Vallerargues: M. la Porte, therefore, seized every opportunity to endeavour to strengthen the faith which he considered as wavering, and became so much interested in Isidore, that he offered to initiate him into his favourite studies, looking upon them as an effectual check to the progress of error. Nor was he without hopes of fitting him for one day succeeding him in his sacred office, and thus converting him from an opposer into a champion of the truth. He continually pressed the subject upon Madeleine's attention, and was much discomposed to find the poor woman so infatuated with Father Bernardine, as to close her ears against every proposition received without his knowledge.

M. la Porte's care over Isidore, and indeed affection for him, increased in proportion to the danger in which he con-

ceived him placed ; and when he could not help remarking that while seated in the recess of the large chimney during the winter's evenings, he was endeavouring to open to his young mind the classic stores of Greece and Rome, his eye and his attention wandered continually to the part of the room where, by the light of a lamp, his daughter Rose was spinning, and singing by her mother's side, he only smiled and shook his head, and again returned to the often explained passage. Whether he had fully made up his mind not to oppose Isidore's growing inclination is doubtful, and perhaps it was simply for the sake of displaying his superior judgment, that he always found some objection to the song of the Genevan worthies, of whose property, age, and dispositions, his wife received constant information from her female correspondents in her native town,

and of which she always made a long enumeration when the marriage of their daughter formed the subject of their private discourse.

Father Bernardine, on his side, would sometimes raise a querulous objection against these frequent visits to the Pastor's house, but his words were not sufficiently powerful to counteract the charm that drew Isidore thither, and his arguments seemed as incomprehensible as his conduct.

Meanwhile the Pilgrim and Isidore continued their route in silence. Each seemed to fear introducing a new topic of conversation, lest it should recal the unpleasant feeling that was just banished from their minds. The moon had disappeared behind the clouds, the scenery became more and more wild, and the latter was on the point of inquiring if

Father Bernardine was well acquainted with the way, and knew the direction they were pursuing, when a light appeared in the surrounding darkness, so faint and trembling, that it might be taken either for a distant star, or the lamp in some cottage, perched amidst the recesses of the mountains. They both perceived it at once; and the Father, with a strength of lungs which was unexpected from one of his age and emaciated appearance, immediately began to make the woods and rocks re-echo to the notes of a vesper hymn, and instantly several voices, which seemed to proceed from the spot where the light still hovered, joined in the harmonious strain. The Father stopped, and, taking Isidore's hand, "This," he said, "is, for the present, the close of the service I exact from you; here we part, but not for long. I would say, follow me,

as Elisha did Elijah of old, and the hand of Providence work the rest, but it cannot yet be. Once more, mark my words: hold yourself free, let no passion overcome you. If you are prudent, you cannot be shackled by human force; but you will be closely watched, and a single false step may undo you. Remember this is not a time for marriage feasts and bridal garments, for blood may flow among them." So saying he disappeared amidst the thickest part of the wood, though no path opened to guide him.

Isidore for some time watched the light which seemed for a while slowly to descend, and at length also vanished; and then, musing on the advice he had received, he turned back by the way they had come, intending, as the night was

fine, and the hour late, to stroll away the interval that remained till sunrise, and not vainly seek a repose which he felt would fly from him.

CHAPTER IV.

Hommes noirs d'où sortez vous ?
Nous sortons de dessous terre,
Moitié renards, moitié loups,
Notre règle est un mystère.

DE BERANGER.

WE must now return to Mons. Vidal, whom we left preparing for an expedition to the Priory of St. Roc. With an air more than usually consequential, he mounted his well trained mule, while Father Saturnine kept pace on foot, ready to answer any questions put to him, but abstaining, with well practised silence, from provoking all needless conversation. The road presented few subjects to excite the Consul's attention, and he suffered himself to be absorbed in conjectures as

to the purport of this summons. It was important not to come wholly unprepared into his patron's presence, but the difficulty lay in forcing information from Father Saturnine, who always yielded it with reluctance. Some hints he thought might be obtained by a man of his penetration, and accordingly, slackening his pace, he began by inquiring after the Prior's health.

"His reverence does not complain," was the reply.

"Ay, but my good friend," continued the Consul, "that is no sure criterion; a man engaged in weighty affairs has seldom time to attend to himself, and the body is worn out by the labours of the mind."

"Perhaps it is so," replied the Father.

"How are his spirits?" said Vidal.

"His reverence," replied the Father, "is not much addicted to carnal mirth."

"Nay, holy Father," said Vidal, "are the Canons of the Church so rigid as to condemn a little harmless gaiety? You yourself, I doubt not, relax sometimes into a smile, not to mention occasional laughter, at your Carnival festivities."

The monk armed himself with a look of horror, as if the supposition were a suggestion of the enemy, and it must be owned, no one else who had seen his death-like countenance appearing from under his black cowl, would have suspected him of such an offence against decorum.

Heedless of the effect of his last remark, Vidal inquired how the Prior had passed the day.

"In solitude and prayer," replied the Father; "none were called to his presence, and none durst venture uncalled."

"That does not the least astonish me," said Vidal.

"Ah! thought he, this solitude and prayer augur ill. I have been told, that religion calms the passions; be that as it may with others, I never saw the Prior, after a day of unusual devotion, but the first glance told me how he had been employed, and dearly I had cause to rue it. Commend me to a jolly Superior, who can laugh aud enjoy himself, and let others enjoy themselves too, but this man, when his conscience twinges a little more than common, and he begins to think of repenting, must needs make all the world do penance along with him. I wish I was safely out of his presence."

All further remarks were prevented by their arrival at the end of their journey, and the ready wicket opened to receive them.

The Priory was seated on an eminence, and reared its stately towers far above the surrounding champaign country, which varied with farms and villages, olivets, streams, and vineyards, lay stretched for many miles, like a far-spreading map below. The splendour of the building had been much increased by the munificence of the present Superior, to whom the monks were indebted for a beautiful chapel, and various reparations and additions to the original pile, to which he had given outwardly the strength and solidity of a Baron's castle, and within, all the magnificence which the utmost stretch of the ecclesiastical statutes would permit. They were, indeed, justly proud of their Prior, and even his vassals, when they observed the admiration of strangers, who turned far out of their way to view the Priory of St. Roc, forgot, in the vanity of

the moment, the hardship and oppression under which they laboured.

The Consul, leaving his mule to be conducted by the grooms to the sumptuous stables constructed for the Prior's palfreys, followed with uncertain steps the solemn tread of Father Saturnine, who, after traversing a length of corridors, ushered him in silence into his patron's private apartment.

There was little in the first appearance of the Prior of St. Roc to warrant the apprehension with which the Consul always beheld him. He was small of stature, wore the plainest dress consistent with his dignity, and displayed none of those tricks of authority which so often impose on the vulgar. But those who knew him best, and were most frequently in his presence, felt that an atmosphere of constraint was breathed around him, which

seemed to shackle even their thoughts. He was descended from an ancient family illustrious in every generation, and, as was usually the case with the younger sons of the nobility, was from his birth destined to the church, for which profession, even in childhood, he always manifested a decided preference. He might almost have been said to be born a Jesuit, and an education among those worthy followers of Loyola only served to develop his natural disposition.

In such a character it was difficult to say what passion predominated; all were at the command of one master-spring,—the desire of aggrandizing the church to which he belonged, or rather himself, as a partaker of her honours. To this object every thing gave way; in this service his devotion was indeed that of the heart, if heart he could be said to possess, who

during his whole life had never displayed one instance of natural feeling. He had early learnt from his instructors, that the end sanctifies the means; and as he contrived to flatter himself that his design was laudable, he would have deemed it a cowardly desertion of the good cause to shrink from any steps by which it might be forwarded, and was thus led to commit actions from which he might have shrunk had his aim been less stedfast. Often, too, the imbecility or fraud of his agents entangled him in difficulties it was easier to cut through than unravel; and yet, so serviceable was his hypocrisy, that he had hitherto escaped with only such a degree of obloquy as it was said superior minds never fail to incur.

The paternal property of the Prior's family had fallen to the elder branch; but a large fortune, which descended from

their mother, had been the portion of his only sister, and was bequeathed to him in the event of her dying unmarried. This sister had early in life, and against the will of her friends, married the Baron de Courcy, a firm adherent to the Protestant faith, unfortunate in all things but the possession of her affection. From that moment she became as one dead to her unyielding brother; but she was still living in the eye of the law, and an incumbrance on the property he had already dedicated in idea to his own use.

By dint of secret practices, an order for the Baron's banishment was procured, as a man capable of fomenting dangerous disturbances amongst a party who had been too deeply injured to be easily trusted by their oppressors; and the Prior *schooled* his conscience into considering it praiseworthy to root out a heretic from the land,

where, like the baneful yew, he shed his noxious influence on all around. It was his zeal obtained an order that the Baron's only child should be separated from its parents, and consigned to his immediate guardianship; and the very satellites of his power were melted by the heartrending grief of the Baroness, when recommending her beloved infant to heaven and her brother's care. And when the child was reported to have sickened and died, an outward appearance of respect to its memory silenced all remarks.

Not long after, the mother also died; and the Prior then scrupled not to declare that no legal marriage could take place between a heretic and a daughter of the church, and braved the infamy he thus cast on his sister's fame for the sake of those large possessions, of which he immediately made himself master.

The wretched Baron de Courcy, forbidden to return and assert his right, saw himself reduced to comparative poverty, in a foreign land; and while he pined in hopeless misery, the Prior, triumphant in success, thanked his patron saint, for having enabled him to make such rich offerings at his shrine.

It was generally supposed that his intimate acquaintance with Monsieur Vidal commenced about this period, when his new accession of wealth rendered his assistance useful; and Vidal's zeal in the character of a convert to the Roman Catholic religion, which led him to harass those he had left by every vexation in his power, could not fail to be acceptable to the Prior. It was, however, remarked that though the new consul talked much of the honour of having such a patron, and professed for him the most devoted grati-

tude, he was rather shy of his presence, and liked his visits to the priory better in retrospect than anticipation.

Such were his feelings on entering the apartment where the Prior sat in solitary state. Vidal made one of his most profound and propitiatory bows, and in so doing, took an opportunity of drawing from the pocket of his coat the bags of silver he had provided himself with. The Prior motioned him to a seat, which seemed to him as if purposely placed that the full blaze of the setting sun might fall upon his countenance, whilst the rest of the chamber was in gloom; and, alas! it was not possible, by a dexterous jirk, to give the ponderous chairs then in fashion a more agreeable position. He therefore seated himself, continuing painfully silent for some time; then, after a few slight hems, ventured to trust his voice with

an inquiry of how his Reverence had slept the preceding night. The Prior, who was writing, thought the question did not deserve a reply; and Vidal, after a few more hems, placed the cash on one corner of the table, pushing it forward by degrees, as he explained, with much circumlocution, the difficulty of getting money, refractory spirit of the tenants, and his own exertions, which were, however, he protested, too trifling to deserve any attention.

"Then let us think no more about them," said the Prior, who, at the beginning of the speech, had suspended his occupation, and sat, his pen in his hand, and his eyes fixed upon the speaker. "It was not, M. Vidal, on such weighty affairs, I requested your presence, this evening. It is long since we met, and I

wished to know if there is any news stirring about you?"

"Your reverence is pleased to be gracious," replied the Consul, "but such an obscure village as Vallerargues can offer little to attract your notice. To be sure, we have the same events as happen to the rest of the world; births, marriages, and deaths, and sometimes they don't come in their proper order, the first before the second!—he! he! he!—but I don't immediately recollect anything of that kind,—all quiet, all happy, as you could wish them."

"You are sure, then, nothing has occurred," repeated the Prior, his countenance darkening as he spoke.

"Nothing, I assure you," replied the Consul. "What can he be sifting after?" thought he, in some consternation, "I'd

make up anything, if I knew what would satisfy him."

"When I seek intelligence of consequence, then," continued the Prior, "I must go elsewhere than to Mons. Vidal. I have been told that a strange lady has taken up her residence at Vallerargues; but perhaps I am misinformed, or the Consul I appointed over the village could not have been ignorant of the circumstance.

"Is that all?" exclaimed Vidal, with some effrontery. "I must own, I had forgotten what was so little worth notice. Lady, did your reverence say? Not much claim to that title, I fancy. I made it my business to inquire; quite a second-rate sort of person, too insignificant to be mentioned in your presence."

Darker grew the Prior's brow, as the Consul vainly endeavoured to twist a little

on one side or the other, from under the scrutiny of his eye.

"You are certain of being well informed?" he again demanded.

"Quite certain," replied the Consul, who saw no way of escape, but by bravely lying.

"Then, Mons. Vidal, either you or I must change our agents, I fear," replied the Prior, and taking a folded paper from his breviary, "this is the deposition I can rely on," and read as follows:

"Madame Durand is a lady of distinguished abilities, professing the pretended reformed opinions in religion, and supposed to have returned to this country for purposes connected with the interest of the Baron de Courcy."

The Prior then replaced the paper, which was in his own handwriting, into the breviary. "Now, Mons. Vidal, what

have you to say, and what do you expect to hear from me?"

The Consul sat speechless, the mortified victim of his own want of veracity and judgment. His reflections were also continually disordered by the anticipation of losing the Prior's protection, whom he knew to be peculiarly tenacious of any inattention on the part of those he employed.

The latter for some time enjoyed his confusion, and then said, " Mons. Vidal, I know you well, and because I know you, I never trust you. You may, perhaps, think me in your power?"

Here the Consul began warmly to protest no such idea had ever entered his mind.

The Prior waved his hand to command silence. " It is useless to give assurances on a point that I hold to be of no conse-

quence. I have employed you, it is true, in affairs I should not wish known to the whole world, but your understanding is too confined, to perceive how subordinate a part you have acted, and with how small a share of the action you were made acquainted; to publish what you know would expose you to the derision of all men of sense, who would in a moment perceive you were grossly ignorant of the plot you pretended to reveal. You are but a wheel in the machinery I set at work, and one which, if thrown aside, would not impede the progress of the whole. It is you, rather, who are in my power, as you may remember ——"

Here the Consul ventured timidly to suggest something of the secrecy and sacredness of confession.

"You need not inform me on that head," continued the Prior; "I am well aware

also how much men rely on that sacrament, when an overburdened conscience seeks a relief it would better find in repentance and amendment; but there are ways of making you feel without violating the ecclesiastical rules. It is not, however, my intention to punish you for this neglect."

"I most humbly thank your reverence," exclaimed Vidal, who apprehended these remonstrances would lead to something he feared more than reproachful words, to which his ear was pretty well accustomed.

"Peace!" cried the impatient Prior, "and hear me to the end. I am assured, as I have already told you, that Madame Durand is in this country for purposes inimical to the well-being of our holy church, and with the impious design of endeavouring to divert from the sacred uses to which I have dedicated it, the

wealth of the late deluded Baroness de Courcy. The Baron has been induced, by some weak counsels, to attempt procuring in the parliament of Montpellier, a ratification of his illegal marriage; and at the same time, vague rumours are afloat, respecting the death of their unhappy child. It is incumbent on me, and on all over whom I have any authority, to stand up in the church's cause, and secure the property which is spent to her glory from worse than destruction, since it is better to destroy our arms than suffer them to pass into the enemy's hands. Now, as to that boy—"

"The boy!" repeated Vidal, in a tone of as much alarm as if the Grand Inquisitor himself were questioning him.

"Ay, the boy," said the Prior, raising his voice—"where is he?"

Vidal turned deadly pale, and his under

lip quivered convulsively as he replied—"Surely, your Reverence jests to ask me such a question. Can I recall the dead? You must remember, that your illustrious nephew, whom, on my humble entreaty, you suffered to remain a short time with the person who had nursed him, did not long survive the departure of his parents, and by your own orders the funeral ceremony was privately performed, and masses said for the repose of his soul."

"Indeed!" cried the Prior, passing his hand before his forehead, as if endeavouring to clear his recollection,—"is it even as you say?"

"Yes," continued Vidal, beginning to revive; "there are even other circumstances which would serve to confirm the fact."

"There is no need, M. Vidal," said the Prior—"I am satisfied. But if I

remember right, there was no evidence—legal evidence I should say—of his decease; and it may be of consequence that I should have such to produce, as you know not what captious antagonists we may meet with. Though I do not doubt your word, yet, for the satisfaction of others, and as witnesses might be with difficulty found, I must beg you to sign a declaration to the purport of what you have just stated, confirming it by oath: and you know," he continued, regarding him steadfastly, "how surely Divine vengeance pursues the perjurer, and how dreadful are the thunders which the church in her wrath hurls against his accused head. Here is the pen—write without delay."

Scarcely conscious of what he did, Vidal took the pen and scrawled what his patron dictated; but his hand shook

so violently, he could with difficulty form the letters.

"Now," said the Prior, without appearing to notice his agitation, "kneel down, take this cross in your hands, and repeat what I shall say."

The terrified Consul, unable to form a single determination, but without courage to refuse, sunk on his knees, and repeated a string of anathemas against himself, should what he swore prove false. As they increased in horror, his tongue refused their utterance, and his lips moved without producing a sound.

"Whence is this?" demanded the Prior, with apparent surprise. "Any one who knew you less intimately than I do, Monsieur Vidal, would have strange suspicions excited: but if you have scruples against an oath, for I desire always to show tenderness to weak consciences,

I will by another method procure for myself the necessary evidence."

So saying, he rose, and taking a taper in his hand, which was always burning before an image of the Virgin, in a recess of his apartment, he commanded the Consul to follow; and opened a small door, concealed at the farther end, in the wainscot. It would be in vain to attempt describing the various tormenting apprehensions that by turns presented themselves to the unhappy Consul, as the Prior preceded him through a winding and descending passage, which opened from a deserted ante-room, and led he knew not whither.

During the time he had been connected in religious worship with the Protestants he had learned many anecdotes, highly coloured, indeed, by the exaggeration of party spirit, which tended to illustrate

monastic cruelty, and the contrivances for executing it; and his imagination pictured nothing less, than that he was about to be consigned to some dungeon, far from the hearing of men, where the torture, under which so many of them had groaned, was to be employed to wrest a confession from him. Nor did the Prior's looks, when he occasionally turned his head to observe if he followed, tend to quiet his fears.

The passage at length terminated at a grated door, which, on the Prior's touching a spring, opened, and admitted them, instead of a dungeon, into the vault under the chapel, where, ranged in gloomy state, reposed the ashes of those who had, from its foundation, borne sway in the monastery. Vidal, who never willingly approached the abode of the dead, had but once visited this place, when, presiding over the obsequies of the Baron's son, he

had, by the Prior's direction, ordered him to be placed in the recess he was himself to occupy after death.

The vault was not of large extent, but its ponderous arches were hid in darkness, except where the solitary taper the Prior carried threw a red glare around, and gave a momentary brightness to the damps that trickled down the mouldering walls. The air was cold, and rushed by fits along with a low sad murmur, that might have been mistaken for the moans of the departed; yet so great was the Consul's terror, that the heat-drops stood on his brow as thick as though he had toiled under a summer's sun.

The Prior walked on, till they reached the niche where his own mortal remains were destined to lie, and where only the small coffin of a child was now to be seen. He then stopped, and, turning to Vidal,

said,—" It is now in your power to satisfy the doubts of others. Nineteen years have elapsed since you placed this coffin here. Time has doubtless done his work, and dust has returned to dust; but there must remain sufficient evidence to convince the most incredulous, that you did not deceive me by a fictitious death: there are the instruments at hand, open this coffin before me."

Vidal still hesitated

" Have a care," cried the Prior, more sternly,—" you are in my power, Sir; and I swear by St. Francis you escape not till I know the truth."

" Then, if you will hear all, you must, my Lord!" exclaimed Vidal, throwing himself on his knees; and, in trembling accents, he proceeded to relate, that thinking to gain to the Prior, by this deceit, the rich inheritance which would fall to

him, he had feigned the illness and death of the young Baron, and had caused a wooden figure to be interred in his stead.

"I knew you had," scornfully replied the Prior; "but it was necessary for me to have the truth from your own lips. And now, miserable wretch! what do you merit for thus seeking to deceive me?"

"Indeed, your Reverence," cried Vidal, piteously, "I meant no harm—I did all for the best, and ——"

"For the best," repeated the Prior. "What, I suppose, that you might keep him secreted, as an instrument to force me into compliance with your desires, should I ever be inclined to resist them?"

"No, indeed, my Lord," replied the Consul; "but I thought—I had the same views, I assure you, as yourself, and——"

"Stop, fool!" exclaimed the Prior,—"I care not what you thought, so as you

do but now obey." He stood for some time under the archway deeply ruminating; and, in the imperfect light, his spare form and pallid countenance might have led him to be mistaken for an inhabitant of that gloomy mansion. At length, he advanced to the Consul, and thus addressed him:—"If I treated you as you most richly deserve, I should give you instantly up to the hand of justice, which has so many claims on you, and avenge my own wrongs, while I made you suffer for those you have inflicted on others; but I am merciful, and, once more, I will give you an opportunity of redeeming the past. It is in vain to attempt cajoling me with an affectation of having practised this treachery for my service; I know you could have no good end in view;—even that I will pass by. But it is essential that the youth you have concealed should

be immediately placed under my protection. The reasons for this are too numerous to be now detailed; suffice it, that it is my will. You cannot have trusted him far from you—the deposit was too important. I give you, therefore, three days for the performance of my orders; bring him to me at the end of that time, or never more think of returning to this country."

"But," said the Consul, willing, like a drowning man, to catch at the slightest twig, "if the young man will not follow me, must I employ ——"

"Ask me no questions," sternly replied the Prior: "my office is to command, yours to find the means of fulfilling my commands. It will be time enough afterwards," he added, with a sneer, "for me to judge of their expediency, and act accordingly."

Again he paused, as if waiting a reply, which, however, he was not likely to receive. "You may now retire, Monsieur Vidal: let to-morrow's dawn see you on your road, and when we next meet, I hope to be able, in favour of your increased zeal, to forget all your past transgressions." So saying, he conducted the still trembling Consul to the stone steps which led to the chapel above, where he dismissed him, and returned himself by the private way to his apartment.

In thus allotting three days for the appearance of his nephew, the Prior consulted chiefly his own impatience; for notwithstanding the confident manner in which he had spoken, he could not but entertain some doubts that Vidal would find it extremely difficult to discover him. If he had always kept an eye on the young man, the task was easy; if he had not,

his exertions in seeking him would be stimulated by fear, and should he fail, he hoped he had at least by his threats secured his absence, without the obligation of coming to such an open breach as he had many reasons for wishing to avoid.

The Consul, meanwhile, repaired to the stable, where he again mounted his mule, which, as one of the grooms maliciously observed, seemed better pleased with her entertainment, than her master. In his solitary ride, he had ample leisure to ruminate on the interview just related, and ample food for rumination. Notwithstanding all the swellings of his vanity, and perhaps he possessed more than usually falls to the share of man, he was now forced to confess that an order had been given him, which it was beyond his abilities to fulfil. But while we leave him to prepare for his hopeless expedition, it

will perhaps be necessary to penetrate into a few of those secret events which reached the Prior's ear, and which Fame, who condescends to meddle even with the meanest, had not failed to whisper confusedly in the neighbourhood of Vallerargues.

CHAPTER V.

When in the garden's fenced and cultured ground,
Where browze no flocks, where ploughshares never
wound,
By sunbeams strengthen'd, nourish'd by the show'r,
And sooth'd by zephyr, blooms the lovely flower;
Maids long to place it in their modest zone,
And youths, enraptur'd, wish it for their own;
But from the stem once pluck'd, in dust it lies,
Nor youth, nor maid, will then desire nor prize.
The virgin thus her blushing beauty rears,
Loved by her kindred, and her young compeers:
But if her simple charm, her maiden's grace,
Is sullied by one spoiler's rude embrace,
Adoring youths no more her steps attend,
Nor loving maidens greet the maiden friend.

LAMB'S *Catullus.*

WHILE the Baron de Courcy lived happy, respected, and beloved at the castle of Vallerargues, Vidal was as zealous for the Protestant, as he afterwards became for the Roman Catholic faith, and by an

hypocritical affectation of piety and attachment to his religion, insinuated himself into the good graces of that too credulous nobleman, who possessed too much integrity in his own bosom, to judge how great might be the meanness and duplicity of others. He raised him from some menial office in his household to the post of his private secretary, and by this confidence, placed in his hands the very weapons he was afrerwards to turn against his benefactor.

The Baron's fortunes tottered and fell, and Vidal, who had clung only to them, had for some time perceived what was passing, and been employed, not only in securing himself from danger in the impending destruction, but in achieving a more successful destiny out of the ruin of others. He had prevailed on the Baron to employ him as his agent, in

transacting some important affairs with the Prior of St. Roc, his brother-in-law, and as the Prior had steadfastly rejected all intercourse with his sister or her new connexions, his visits to the priory were frequent. He began his schemes by well-feigned scruples of conscience, and, after a short combat, which was to imply that he yielded only to conviction, entreated to be admitted into the bosom of the church, though, for a time, his apostasy was to be kept secret.

As the first fruits of such a conversion, he betrayed to the Prior many of the Baron's secret feelings, and gave into his possession several papers, in which he had heedlessly written his inmost thoughts. These became the groundwork for the intrigues, which too fatally suceeded, and ended in procuring his banishment.

Previous to these nefarious transactions, Vidal had gained the affections of a young woman intrusted with the care of the young De Courcy, and who was equally with himself, a favourite of the family. Louise was the daughter of a protestant minister, who, sharing the poverty of his flock, thought himself too happy, on her mother's death, to procure such a situation for his child, and, without sufficient examination, gave his consent to a union that had been sanctioned by her patrons. He, however, pleaded for some delay, on account of her youth, and in the mean time the order arrived for the Baron's instant departure.—Vidal undertook to prevail on the Prior not immediately to separate the child from one who felt for him the attachment of a second mother, and Louise retired with the infant to her father's house, at a village in the moun-

tains a few leagues distant. For some time, Vidal continued his visits with the same zeal, still professing the warmest attachment, and bitterly lamenting the many important cares which had devolved on him, and prevented the completion of his happiness.

But the mask soon became troublesome, as well as useless.—The unfortunate Louise did not conceal his power over her heart, and he profited by the knowledge to betray *her*, whom he should rather have given his life to defend from harm. Vainly did his wretched victim solicit the performance of his vows, they had been cancelled as soon as he was aware, that poverty was her only portion; and, to the world, he considered the change in his religion would be a suffi cient reason for declining to connect himself with the daughter of an heretical

teacher. While hope remained, she was silent, and for some time brooded over her shame and misery in secret anguish; but when, day after day, she sat at the window, which overlooked the road leading from Vallerargues, and listened in vain, with suspended breath and eager ear, to every horse's tread, and bark of village cur, that had formerly announced his approach, her spirit sunk within her, and so deep a melancholy ensued, that life itself became a burden.

Mons. Brunel, intrusting his child, during his absence, to the care of a woman who possessed too little principle to fulfil her charge conscientiously, had accompanied the Baron de Courcy, his wife, and sister, to Switzerland; where from his acquaintance with many persons of worth, he hoped to procure them some alleviation of their pain.—His return was

now daily expected, but what a weight of wo awaited him! The first intelligence he received was, that the Baron's child had been secretly and mysteriously carried off, and every attempt made for discovering the author of this nefarious deed had proved ineffectual. This seemed an adequate cause for the alteration in Louise's looks, and to account for the dejection of her whole deportment—but it was not all. The blow which appeared to her as coming only from the hand that had already so deeply wounded her peace, completed the overthrow of reason. In the wildness of despair, she rushed one morning into her father's presence, and with frantic incoherence, uttering maledictions against the author of her disgrace, poured the last drop of misery into the cup which he was destined to drain to the very dregs.

What a confession from a child! what a hearing for a parent! But he did not upbraid her; no, he saw the hand of the Almighty was stretched out against her, and he thanked God, he was not called upon to cast the first stone. He did not seek for vengeance, for he was a Christian; besides all human vengeance would have been no more than as a drop of water poured upon the fire of his wrongs. But how hard a task remained to be fulfilled. If he was a father, he was a minister also, and the discipline he had sworn to maintain, was not to be slackened because it was his own right hand that was to be cut off.

It was his duty, as a warning to others, publicly to declare, before the chiefs of his congregation, the offence committed against public morals; and the following

Sunday, he ascended the pulpit with this determination. Already were vague whispers afloat, and some with sympathy, some with that restless curiosity which feeds itself with pleasure even on the misfortunes of others, awaited the confirmation of their suspicions. To all, the wretched father was alike insensible; he hoped, he feared, nothing more. Who would he have found ready to receive as an excuse, that while he watched over their present and eternal interests, the child of his love, whose heart, like a luxuriant soil, produced weeds and flowers in wild profusion, had been neglected; that the perpetually recurring duties of a parent were left undone, while his rapt soul seemed almost to have forsaken its mortal tabernacle in the sublimity of devotional feelings. He felt he had erred, but it was

before his Creator he humbled himself, for "He seeth not as man seeth, and judgeth not as man judgeth."

Never had his prayers been more fervent than on this day of anguish; never had he more forcibly touched the hearts of his hearers, than when his own was thus rent with sorrow: even the aged, who seemed to have outlived the relief of tears, felt the unbidden drops trickle down their weatherbeaten cheeks: his voice was firm, his cheek was pale, but his eye glared with unwonted fire; for he knew that mercy was boundless in its power. But one glance at the bench below was sufficient to convince him that though transgression may be forgiven, it must never go unpunished. The Elders followed the direction of the father's eye. What a sight they beheld! His Louise, the pride, the joy of his life, the sunshine

in which all his hopes had bloomed, the soother of his cares, the comfort of his years of widowhood, sat there, unconscious of what was passing; her looks wandering around with unmeaning indifference, and at times a vacant smile mocking her own woe. This was the criminal he was to condemn to ignominy! this was the fallen one against whom he was to point the finger of scorn!

The last psalm was sung, the last echo died away;—in that awful silence, he descended the pulpit steps, and while his heart bled within him, made the dreadful truth known. But nature spent her strength in the effort, and he was carried out of the church in strong convulsions. The assembly followed sorrowing; all bitterness died away within them, or was changed into compassion and regret.

It was long before the Pastor recovered

the shock his mind had received, and during the time that sickness prevented his personal watchfulness, Louise, alive only to a sense of her misfortunes, with a cunning not uncommon in those whose minds are similarly affected, had left her father's house, and found her way to Vallerargues, where her betrayer resided in ease and comparative opulence. She reached the village late one stormy evening: Vidal sat by his blazing fire, and though guarded by every precaution from the cold, he shuddered as the tempestuous wind swept round his house, or moaned in the wide old-fashioned chimney. Louise softly lifted the latch, and entered, her hair dripping, her clothes drenched with rain, and her face pale with sorrow. The terrified maid, who was preparing supper, ran screaming up stairs, at the sight of what, she doubted not, was the

perturbed spirit of one who had died in guilt or despair, while the no less terrified master, too conscious it was a living sufferer stood before him, endeavoured to collect courage to address her.

But why should we stop to relate minutely the arts of villany, or the wrongs of a being too obscure to excite the world's attention? Louise, with the eloquence of a broken heart, that might have moved a savage to relent, pleaded his promises, and called at least for justice, bitterly complaining of the last cruelty, that had deprived her of her only remaining treasure. The rage of Vidal, when at length, through the incoherence of her expressions, he gathered that the Baron's child was lost, was too violent and too sincere, to leave any doubt as to his ignorance of the fact; and when he found no clue could be given, by means

of which he should be enabled to commence a search for its recovery, it turned with increased fury on the unhappy Louise, on whom he determined to wreak his vengeance, by taking advantage of the state to which his perfidy had reduced her.

Under pretence of a strict adherence to the laws for the preservation of morality, she was confined for the night in the common prison, and the next day, publicly whipped from the village, while the hootings of the populace, and clamours of the drums, drowned the voice of complaint, and, as he hoped, secured him from the opprobrium due to his cruelty.

Even in the disordered state of her mind, such a disgrace could not be borne without anguish. No sooner was she released, than Louise fled, but it was not to her father's home. The goading sense

of shame drove her incessantly onward; and as it is difficult to trace the paths of misery, it would be hard to say what distant spots witnessed her bodily and mental sufferings.

After many years had elapsed, there appeared among the mountains nearest her native village a poor maniac, in whose worn and haggard features some imagined they could trace a faint resemblance to the rosy dimpled cheeks and laughing eyes of the once lovely Louise; but all attempts to reconcile her again to a settled life were vain, and as her unhappy father was generally supposed to be dead, she was left to follow the wild vagaries of her fancy, and to enjoy that liberty which is the only comfort such wretchedness can feel.

As the name of her seducer had not been made public with her fault, only

vague surmises of the truth existed: Vidal's authority silenced open scrutiny and the expression of avowed suspicion. Whether he was equally successful in silencing the voice of conscience, his sleepless nights or terrifying dreams best witnessed.

After vainly endeavouring, by every means compatible with secrecy, to discover the child, he was compelled to delude the Prior by a feigned account of its death, and till the present moment hugged himself in the success of his deceit. But the command he had just received from the Prior put an end to this satisfaction. The total ignorance he was in respecting the person who could have betrayed this deception now increased his perplexity, and it was impossible that he should conceal from himself the difficulties with which he was surrounded. How could

he expect to be more successful in his search, now that the lapse of so many years had, if possible, still more completely obliterated every trace that might have guided his inquiries? How could he hope so quickly to find the unhappy vagrant he had driven from the world? And if found, could he bear the anguish of her looks—could he dare, in his distress, to supplicate one to whom he had refused all pity? Yet this seemed the only course to be pursued; and recollecting the last faint information he had casually received, of the usual places of appearance of the poor mad woman that frequented the mountains, he determined to bend his course thither, and to try both threats and entreaties to induce her to give him all the information respecting the child's disappearance that she might be possessed of. Indeed, he had always

found it difficult to efface from his mind the idea, that Louise and her father had themselves concealed him, to avoid the interference of his uncle in his religion and future prospects.

It will not appear strange, that with a mind thus unpleasantly occupied, the Consul abstained from fulfilling his engagement that evening with Leah Coste, especially as that lady had always testified a large portion of female curiosity concerning every thing that related to Louise, and that even while writhing under the torture of her questions and remarks, he dared not own the pain they gave him.

The sun had not yet appeared above the high range of hills that lay to the east of Vallerargues, when Simon, who had been ordered the preceding evening to be in readiness, appeared at the Consul's

door, where he fastened the mule, and entered the kitchen, to try the hospitality of the kind-hearted Perrette. Already was this notable damsel in the height of her employments. On the raised hearth, where a sprightly fire burned, was placed a large earthen pot, heating in the glowing embers, and containing soup for the breakfast of three or four countrymen who were employed in the Consul's métairie. A small lamp, suspended by a hook near the chimney, was expending its last supply, and as it died away occasionally threw its broad light on the smutty ceiling, from whose well-stored rafters one of the men was taking down some dried sausages to store their wallets for the day; another from a large barrel filled the cased bottles with wine, which he ever and anon put to his lips, with a rueful face, declaring he should have mistaken it for vinegar;

while a third repaired to an oaken chest that stood in the corner, and cut slices of brown bread for the soup, which was now reeking and ready.

Perrette, meanwhile, bustled about with a smile and a goodnatured word to each, and taking the savoury mess of lentils from the fire, proceeded to fill each expectant's plate. This was a sight and an odour that strongly tempted Simon, whose scanty meals at home usually left him ready to do honour to any feast that might afterwards fall in his way. So, with one of his most persuasive looks, addressing Perrette, he begged a share, protesting her cooking to be so excellent, it gave an appetite but to think of it.

"Hunger is your sauce, I believe, Master Simon," replied the damsel to this compliment; "but what will our master say?"

" Oh, never fear," replied Simon, " I am before my time; and I warrant him yet fast asleep in his bed," he added, as he held out his plate.

" Well," said Perrette, " you must bear the blame, if blame fall; but as to his being asleep, that I'll take upon me to say he has not been all night, and has asked for you three times already."

" Nay, then, my good Perrette," replied Simon, " it becomes me to make the more speed; and suiting his actions to his words, he poured large spoonfuls of the pottage down his throat, with a rapidity that astonished those who saw the small capacity of his meagre jaws. He had scarcely time to wipe the tell-tale remains from his mouth when Vidal appeared, wrapped in his roquelaire, a well-loaded whip in his hand, his pistols hanging from a broad leathern belt, and a capa-

cious pair of saddle bags across his arm. While these were fixing on the mule, the Consul gave his last orders to his domestics, and then seating himself in his high-peaked saddle, he ambled out of the village, followed by Simon, who, however, lingered long enough to hear many fervent wishes for their master's long absence, and to receive from the hand of the obliging Perrette a remnant of black pudding, which he stuffed into the pocket of his doublet.

The Consul was much too perturbed for conversation, and Simon much too delighted to be set free, for an indefinite period, from the tuition of his spouse, to desire any other pleasure. As the morning was cold, he had tied a large handkerchief entirely over his head and face, leaving only one eye uncovered to pick his steps. In this state of happy, thought-

less enjoyment, he might have travelled the livelong day, if the thundering voice of his master, exclaiming "Who goes there?" had not reached his ears; when, pulling down his shade, he heard the sounds of a hautboy, and perceived a young man, who was playing a plaintive air, as he advanced along the road they were pursuing.

"Who goes there?" repeated Vidal; but the musician appeared to pay no attention to the summons.

It was Isidore returning from accompanying the Pilgrim, and who was too much engrossed with the remembrances his own music called forth to break the charm abruptly. Vidal quickly recognised him, and his evil tempers, which had sprung from many various subjects of disquietude, now centred on this unexpected cause of provocation.

"Young man, stop your vile piping," he cried, "my mule cannot stand it;" and he gave her a sharp prick with his spur, to induce her to make good his words. His passion rendered this sharper than he intended, and the mule, whose accustomed sobriety gave little expectation of such friskiness, began to kick and plunge, while Vidal, who was not much celebrated as an equestrian, found his anger increase in proportion with his fears.

"Young man," he exclaimed again, with fury, "stop that cursed piping, or by St. Francis, I'll make you sing to it;" and he raised his whip over his head in a threatening attitude.

Isidore paused. "Have a care, M. Vidal," he said, "lest while you threaten I should act. I am not inclined to stand tamely and be struck by any man, much less by one——"

"What do you mean, sirrah!" cried Vidal; "do you know who I am, and who you are?"

"Yes," replied Isidore, "I know you well, and therefore I am the less inclined to fear you. But I advise you," he added, "to suffer me to pass without opposition," perceiving the Consul had placed his mule in such a manner across the narrow road as to effectually prevent his further progress.

"I shall let you pass when I please, and not till then," retorted the Consul, "and that will not be until you have satisfied me how it happens, that you are at a place so distant from Vallerargues at such an unsuitable hour. I have an eye on you, young man, and I am not without my suspicions, I can assure you."

Isidore made a strong effort to answer

him with composure, and briefly explained the cause of his nocturnal ramble.

"Ay, ay," replied Vidal, "one may judge of a man by his company; that old beggar should have been in the galleys long since, and I doubt not but he would only have returned to his old lodgings. I never could endure his crazy flights and hypocritical cantings. Where is his hiding-place now?"

Isidore declared himself ignorant of it, as they had parted on the road.

"A likely story that you have trumped up for me," said Vidal; "but I am not to be blinded by a spider's web. Tell me this moment where he is, or you shall answer in a place where you may be forced to speak the truth."

"Do you doubt my word?" exclaimed Isidore, indignantly.

"Yes," cried the Consul, "and twenty

such words and oaths as yours, which can be bought for a livre."

"Retract that base aspersion," exclaimed Isidore, "or——"

"Or what?" said Vidal, with contempt, and again brandishing his whip. "I say you were a sect of liars from the beginning, and never will I cease my efforts till your presence no longer pollutes the country."

He had barely time to utter the last words; for Isidore, springing forward with an impetuosity he did not expect, considering the inequality of their positions, seized his uplifted whip with one hand, and with the other the bridle of the affrighted mule, who, rising on her hind legs, flung the infuriated Consul to the ground. Rage almost choked him, but instantly drawing a pistol from his belt, he fired it at his antagonist. Happily his

aim was unsteady; the ball grazed Isidore's cloak, but the report sobered him. He had been led by momentary passion to commit an action which his calmer reason condemned; and the whole affair had passed so rapidly, that no time was left for reflection. But he now perceived what serious consequences might have followed, and he heartily repented his having been led so soon to disregard the advice of his aged friend. Without stopping to demand or offer any apology, he passed quickly on, and in his haste narrowly escaped stumbling over the terrified Simon, whom the report of the pistol had stretched along the road.

It was not long before Vidal rose, and vented his impotent and inhuman rage by severe blows on the head and sides of the unhappy mule. Nor did the luckless Simon escape some portion of his wrath;

while the sound lashes bestowed on his back drew forth pretty loud symptoms of life from the inanimate 'Squire.

"You sneaking, trembling coward," cried Vidal, "is this the way you stand by, and see your master murdered by a ruffian?"

"You cannot accuse me of standing, master, I think," replied Simon, piteously, "for my legs seemed to fail me all at once; and, to tell you the truth, I judged it best to keep quiet and see fair play, and be ready to come to your help when the mischief was over. I cannot think you'd have fared the better, if I had come in for my share; and," he added, rubbing his shoulder, "share before and share after is too much for any man. But I'll run after the villain, if your honour's willing."

"No, no," replied Vidal, "you'd ask

no better; and when should I see you again, I wonder? No,—I can catch him when I please; and may I never cross my threshold again if my revenge do not follow him."

"He'll have a sweet time of it then," muttered Simon to himself. "You're a hard man to your friends, methinks; what must you be to your foes?"

"What are you saying there, scoundrel?" exclaimed Vidal.

"Nothing, Sir," replied Simon; "I was only thinking I would not be in his skin for something. But I see the girth is broken in your fall—your quick way, I mean, of getting off the mule's back."

The Consul was vexed to discover this addition to his misfortune; but as, luckily, Simon produced a cord from his pocket, the mischief was soon remedied, and they proceeded on their journey, though somewhat discomposed by the adventure.

CHAPTER VI.

He preferred me
Above the maidens of my age and rank,
Still shunned their company, and still sought mine;
I was not won by gifts, yet still he gave,
And all his gifts, though small, yet spoke his love.
He picked the earliest strawberries in the woods,
The cluster'd filberts, and the purple grapes,
He taught a prating stare to speak my name,
And when he found a nest of nightingales
Or callow linnets, he would show 'em me,
And let me take 'em out.

DRYDEN.

ISIDORE pursued the road which led to the village, with quick steps, to prevent, if possible, the uneasy reflections that obtruded themselves from resting in his mind, and he reached his home, just as the inhabitants were about to commence

the various labours of the day. Madeline seemed on this morning actuated by unusual curiosity; she was standing at her door, apparently listening to the gossip of an old crony, but with her eye turned towards the way she expected her son, and on his first appearance, broke away with the accustomed apology "excusas aumen," though her friend loudly vociferated that the best part of the story was to come.

Her questions were numerous, and of various in their nature, that it was difficult to arrange suitable replies with adequate celerity. They chiefly turned on what had passed between him and Father Bernardine, which he found himself inclined to relate with some degree of reserve and circumspection; and perhaps this caution, which he was sometimes forced to adopt, was the severest trial the

good woman had to meet with from a son who studied her comfort and happiness in every particular; but Isidore was too clear-sighted not to perceive that his mother, amidst her many excellent qualities, was fond of having secrets trusted to her, and, at the same time, was too anxious to keep them safe, not to be occasionally, though unintentionally, indiscreet. It was always with the greatest delicacy he eluded her questions, but still he did elude them, and Madeline was too much piqued to notice his manner. On the present occasion, she could not refrain from some lamentations at her hard fate, in having but one child, and he so reserved, that he might as well be deaf and dumb, for all the information she could gather from him, and she turned away to hide her vexation. Isidore saw her brow overclouding, and her looks saddening,

and though he could not but consider the effect as a little disproportioned to the cause, yet he remembered it was the same face, now wrinkled and worn with care and toil, whose smiles had been, in his childhood, the sweetest sight his eye beheld; and putting his arm round her neck, with a kiss of the warmest affection, he reminded her, that he had left the village the preceding evening, and had neither tasted food nor repose since then.

"Not ate nor slept since, my poor boy," cried the mother, forgetting every subject of displeasure in her anxiety, "what a barbarous creature you must take me for, to stand gossipping here, and forget your breakfast; come quickly, the fire shall be made up and every thing ready in a few minutes. Poor boy! to stand so patiently—what could I be thinking of? we'll

talk of all this another time, for I am sure the old father had something very important to say to you."

Isidore protested he had made him no communication whatever, but the good woman shook her head, and looked at him with an incredulous air yet; absorbed in the task of providing for his wants, she soon forgot the object of her inquiries, in the necessary preparation for their frugal morning's meal. What Isidore chiefly desired to conceal from his mother, was the caution given him by the Pilgrim, to be on his guard against Vidal, as well as his subsequent meeting with the Consul, who, feared and disliked by all the village, seemed always to impose a particular dread on old Madeline; and the enmity known to exist between him and her son had given rise to so many remonstrances, on her part, that he was always careful to

avoid even the mention of Vidal's name in her presence.

The causes of difference between the Consul and Isidore, were by no means a secret in the little circle in which they moved. The admiration of the former for Rose la Porte, the Pastor's daughter, had long been as much talked of in Vallerargues, as he desired it should be, and accustomed to overcome difficulties in his progress against the stream, which seemed to oppose his rise from insignificance, he was little disposed to doubt of success, or to remember that petty cabals, the arts of intrigue, effrontery and impudence, though they may fill a man's purse, are not always the best means of subduing a fair lady's heart. The feelings of Isidore were perhaps less known, but secrecy is not long in the power of a lover, since his looks and actions are continually ready

to betray him. Indeed it was scarcely possible for a young man of his turn of character to be indifferent to Rose. It was not her beauty alone that distinguished her, but the perpetual sunshine of her smiles, which subdued even the most morose; it was not the useful even tenor of her life, which is usually more esteemed than admired, but the feminine grace that displayed itself in her most trifling actions, and the perfect acquiescence of her will, at the call of every duty, so far superior to the forced compliance, that gives pain while it appears to endeavour to please;—there was a harmony in her character, which while it prevented any one quality from predominating too much, proved the existence of a powerful principle within, that guided and regulated all; and she who enlivened the gaiety of the cheerful, could share

equally without appearance of affectation or constraint the tears and complaints of the mourner. Though distant, and even timid, in the common intercourse of society, she could calmly support her own dignity, and maintain her independence, whenever the exertion was necessary. Religion had not rendered her perfect, but its effect was everywhere visible, and in nothing more, than in the crowning grace of humility, which softened every attraction. La Porte, who loved his child with the affection of a father towards an only daughter, felt an indescribable mixture of tenderness and anxiety, as he fondly gazed upon her, and reflected that, according to the ordinary laws of human life, he could not hope for many years to watch over his treasure; tears of apprehension would roll down his aged cheeks, and his busy imagination imbitter the

present with painful foresight into the future.

His wife, whose affection was perhaps equally warm, though less anxious, looked upon this as a weakness, and notwithstanding her respect for her husband, sometimes hinted, that such divings into futurity implied a distrust of the care or the power of Providence; and was particularly eloquent on the subject, when Mons. la Porte, from a timidity he could not master, and which argument only served to increase, from day to day, put off taking such notice of Vidal's pretensions as must be followed by their final rejection; still hoping that circumstances would give him the resolution, he should have sought in the sense of doing what was right. Not that he was less averse than herself to any connexion with a man so devoid of principle, but he was

more aware of the lengths to which his villany could carry him, and of the many points in which, as a minister and a father, he was vulnerable. These fears also deterred him from giving much encouragement to young Isidore, for whom his regard was sincere, and in this circumspection his wife perfectly agreed with him, though her motive was different.

Even the best of women have some share of a mother's pride; and Madame la Porte, who daily witnessed the superiority of her daughter to the other young females around, would have warmly remonstrated against a union, which would degrade her daughter to the level of a peasant, when she aimed at raising her even above her rank and fortune, and had planned, as far as a wife can plan, whose utmost liberty is circumscribed by this proviso—"if my husband gives me leave,"

to take her on a visit to her relations at Geneva, "and we shall see," thought the good lady, "if Monsieur Vidal or Monsieur Isidore will think of following us there."

Such ideas as these occupied this worthy couple one evening, as they sat over the fire in that mood of listlessness which allows every fancy to occupy the mind in its turn. "I was thinking, my dear," at length began Monsieur la Porte, "of a proposal that good lady made me to-day."

"What good lady, my dear?" replied his wife,—knowing very well all the time who was meant.

"Madame Durand, I should say, who wishes us to allow Rose to pass a short time with her this summer, when she purposes making a little tour in the Mountains."

"I see nothing very good in that," said Madame la Porte; "Rose is a pleasant companion, and I know many who would be glad of her company."

"Indeed!" replied the Pastor, "I wonder you never told me so; but it was not for that reason I called her good. I am not in general liberal of compliments, and you may therefore give me credit when I say a civil thing."

"I don't question your discernment, my dear," replied Madame la Porte; "but I don't exactly see that is a reason for my being deprived of my daughter."

"Remember for how short a time is the deprivation," he replied.

"Besides," said his wife, "I might have been spoken to on the subject before it had gone so far."

"And am not I Rose's father," said M. la Porte, a little surprised at the air

of pique visible in her countenance, and which so rarely appeared there.

"To be sure," she replied: "but the world is apt to imagine that mothers should also be consulted."

"Indeed, my dear," said M. la Porte, smiling, "if it were a proposal of marriage, more form might have been requisite, but such a simple request did not appear to me to demand it."

"Men never can see impropriety in trifles," replied Madame la Porte; "but Leah Coste has already said to me, that I am looked upon as a mere nobody by this stranger, and as I am *your* wife, that should never be."

"And never will, my dear," replied her husband, affectionately, "as long as your virtues and many excellent qualities are known and properly estimated; but I should have thought a woman of your

good sense would be above listening to such frivolous remarks. Have you any other objection to start to my proposal?"

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Madame la Porte, "I could have got over Madame Durand's not asking me, but I have written to my cousin Dumont, that I have some hopes of seeing her this summer; Rose is old enough to be introduced into the world, and to judge of things for herself."

"And did you also tell your cousin you had my consent?" inquired the husband.

"No, indeed," said the lady—"How could I, when I had not even asked it; but I told her there were such good reasons for wishing the journey to take place, that I had not the least doubt you would be as anxious for it as myself."

"I am sorry," replied La Porte, calmly,

" you have done so, because it lets your cousin see we sometimes differ as to what are good reasons."

" But surely, my dear," said the lady, " when I have gone so far, you will not, for the sake of a stranger, oblige me to unsay every thing, and let my own family think me only a cipher in the house."

" My dear," he replied, " I would do a great deal to preserve your credit, but, unfortunately, in the present case I have gone farther than you; your promise was only conditional, I have promised unconditionally, as they say the law of a husband is like that of the Medes and Persians. Mention this to your cousin, Dumont;—if, as I doubt not, she is a dutiful wife, she will instantly see the reasonableness and force of the excuse; if she does not, it is a bad sign, and you and Rose are far better at home."

Madame la Porte knew opposition to be vain, but she always took the liberty of remonstrating, lest the privilege should become obsolete from disuse. She therefore continued—" All you say is very true ; but sometimes your mind is so much occupied with matters of importance, that you overlook what is passing around you, and while Rose remains in this village, that young Isidore will still have free access to her, and Leah Coste almost told me, in plain terms, that the world begins to talk."

" And who can prevent it," said M. la Porte, " as long as there are any listeners left? If you, my dear, would give no encouragement to such as Mademoiselle Coste, we should not be teazed with its remarks: the repeaters of scandal are about as disagreeable as the inventors. It is not my intention to lock up my

daughter: if people are so good as to interpret the young man's looks, I am not obliged to receive their interpretation, unless he authorises me; and I don't think you can say he has at any time behaved in a manner that could call for the slightest rebuke."

"No, indeed," said his wife; "he is a very modest, discreet youth,—wonderfully so, considering where he was brought up."

"In a cottage as well as in a palace, my dear," replied M. la Porte, "we may sometimes find refinement of mind and manner; but, in the present case, you forget the instruction he has received from me, and that in classical literature, also, he is as well versed as many who have passed some years at the university."

"Yes," continued the lady, "I grant all he owes to you; though, by the way

I have often thought it a waste of learning, and that he could handle the plough as well as if he had never heard of Horace and Virgil, and a hundred more of their companions. But I never can believe," she continued, drawing herself up with much dignity, " that you design our child, the grandaughter of an elder of respectability, great-grandaughter of a rector of the college, and so well connected both on the father's and mother's side, to throw herself away upon a peasant-boy."

" Madame la Porte," he replied, with some impatience, " it is extremely unpleasant to me to be asked what I mean to do, before I have made up my own mind; but you forget this peasant, as you call him, is not a day-labourer, and that when a man has house, food, and raiment, without depending on any one, he is not to be despised by a poor pastor's

daughter. However, I beg the subject may be dropt, and that you will take care Rose, who is much too young to think of such things, may be so well employed, that ideas of marriage and courtship shall not enter her head."

"I would most willingly obey you," she replied, "but I fear the mischief is already done; for Leah Coste ——"

"Always that woman's name," cried her husband: "it is a sound of ill omen to me, and I never hear it but I expect some disaster to follow. Well! what has she done now?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Madame la Porte, wishing she could retract her words, "only, in a joking way, she gave some little hints. I believe she had tried to sound Rose before on the subject, but poor Rose could not understand her. About a month back, Isidore was here

one evening, waiting for you, and Rose came in with Leah, from a visit to a sick neighbour, looking very confused, and, I must say, very beautiful. I did not know what was going on, for I sat in a rather dark corner reading, but whenever I looked up I perceived Isidore stammering and colouring like a fool, whenever he spoke, Rose hanging down her head, and Leah now and then giving one of her significant hems, looking very knowing, and turning her little black eyes, first on one and then on the other yet; I should never have suspected what it meant, if it had not struck me how like the young people were to you and I, my dear, when we used to sit a little behind my poor father's own chair, and he thought we were listening to what he was reading out of some huge black book, that set every one else in the room asleep. The moment I

guessed anything, I sent Rose into the garden, where, after the others went away, I found the poor thing crying as if her heart would break, but she tried to hide it from me. However, she at last owned that her distress arose from Leah Coste's endeavouring to persuade her, that she knew she was in love with Isidore; and this vexed her so much, she could with difficulty be comforted. You know you remarked her eyes were red at supper, for she had never ceased crying, though I endeavoured to convince her, that Isidore would never be so presuming as to think of what must be so displeasing to her parents."

"And this," said Mons. la Porte, "you women call joking! Among the lesser pests of society, the first rank should be assigned to those female tattlers, who, after the age of coquetry is passed with

themselves, go about to raise the expectations and disturb the imaginations of those, who, without their aid, might remain some years longer in unaffected simplicity. I need not have said, those who are too old to be coquettes, for that is an indefinite period; and I have been disgusted with the same practice in a bevy of young women, who get together to whisper of their admirers, and disclaim, and deny, and hint, and suspect, pretending shame and anger, yet never suffering the delightful topic to flag. It is such companions that give the first tarnish to female bashfulness, and the blushing consciousness that often mantles on the cheek, is not always the livery of innocence. I would give something if such kindlers of mischief under pretence of amusement, were marked by public contempt, and that no young woman could hear of love, but as an honourable passion, which,

under proper regulations, it was no disgrace either to inspire or return. However the evil is done, and poor Rose must pay the penalty, for the indiscretion of thismeddling busybody. This still further confirms me in the pleasure with which I agreed to Madame Durand's proposal: under her care, at least, she will be removed from vulgar arts and insinuations, and as to the rest, it is not necessary to come to any determination. So, my dear, good night, and remember what I have said."

Madame la Porte felt the truth of his remarks, and was silent;—an example of discretion, that deserves to be generally followed.

According to the Pastor's promise, Rose became Madame Durand's guest and when more acquainted with that lady, enjoyed all the pleasures and advantages her society was formed to bestow, and to

which Rose was peculiarly alive. Some minds have an instinctive preference for refinement, and cannot even be at ease with vulgarity; this she had frequently felt, among such companions of her own age as could be selected for her in Vallerargues; and the difference between their manners and those of Madame Durand, was of itself no trifling recommendation. She felt, also, that purest of all delights, the consciousness of giving pleasure; and found no effort she could make to gratify her new friend, however trifling, pass unnoticed. In consequence of the Pilgrim's discourse, and the effect of his engaging appearance, Madame Durand had questioned Mons. la Porte respecting Isidore, and the accounts she received from him, were so favourable that he became immediately a welcome visiter, nor did the involuntary smile that played on her favourite's countenance, when he

appeared, contribute a little to dispose her towards him. So much was she struck with his acquirements, as well as the fine openness of his character, that she secretly resolved that every endeavour in her power should be used, to complete what seemed so happily begun, and if her parents consented, to forward what appeared so likely to ensure the happiness of Rose. These determinations, however, were the result of longer acquaintance, and it is necessary to premise, that the conversation we have related above, should not, in the strict order of chronology, have been mentioned so soon. We took the liberty of introducing it here, in order to leave the worthy Consul time to advance on his way. We must now, therefore, return to him, and endeavour to account for the time of his absence from Vallerargues, being longer than was appointed him by the Prior.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh, open the door, some pity to show,
Keen blows the northern wind,
The glen is white with the drifted snow,
And the path is hard to find.
The Palmer.

Travelling slowly, both to spare his mule, and to allow of Simon's keeping pace with him, the Consul arrived at the first village, where his inquiry was to be made, but in vain, no tidings of the unfortunate maniac were to be obtained, and many a weary day was spent in pursuing contradictory directions, which were rendered still more obscure by the blunders of Simon, who was occasionally employed in gleaning intelligence. In this manner

the Consul traversed the romantic scenes that adorn the base of the Lower Cevennes, wandered among their wide-spreading woods of chesnut, now leafless and unadorned, and crossed those streams which carry fertility along with them to the plains below. Led by a faint gleam of hope, he ascended the wild regions of the Upper Cevennes, and the mountains of Lozere, whose summits are lost in the clouds, and where stern winter, who is scarcely permitted to visit the fertile and glowing plains of the low country, finds an asylum suited to his gloomy horrors. In the midst of these heights, chiefly covered with pine, fir, and beech, extend in different parts, some spaces of level ground, but so skreened from the sun's rays, so barren, with rocks and masses of stone, that, excepting chesnuts and a species of coarse rye, nature bestows no gifts on the

cultivators, and leaves them to procure a scanty subsistence, by their invincible fortitude and unwearied industry. In these regions, during whole months, enclosed in their cottages by the depth of the snow, the poor inhabitants feed on black bread, hardened by time, roots, truffles, cheese made of sheep's milk, and chesnuts, prepared for their winter store, by being dried on large iron plates, over the hot embers. This last article of food, calling for neither care nor culture, may be looked upon as a peculiar blessing of Providence, and without which, the sturdy mountaineers could never, during the long war that was carried on against them, have expelled famine from an immense district, when deprived of all other resources, and pursued, night and day, by the troops of their enemies. Yet, with anxious looks, they watch the decreasing

provisions, and gaze wistfully for the first beams of a late-returning Spring. Nor are the people less rude than their climate; coarse in their dress, appearance, manners, and dialect, they frequently, about Easter, descend their rugged and almost impracticable roads, to follow the trades of tinkers, bellows-menders, and knife-grinders, or to perform the more laborious tasks in the harvest and vintage, which would overpower the strength of their more degenerate lowland neighbours; and often is the uncouth, though athletic mountaineer, pointed at with a look and expression of derision. Yet these mountains were formerly the abode of manly freedom and ardent zeal for religion; in their wild regions, was kindled a flame, which authority and force united, could not extinguish, even by a barbarity that savages could scarcely have exceeded, and which

carried by those who felt its influence into a wider sphere, has left an undying spark as a light for happier days.

At the period of Vidal's journey, the eye could nowhere turn, without perceiving the ruin caused by man's pride and bigotry, added to the natural horrors of the scene; nor is that to be wondered at, when we consider what had taken place there.

* In the year 1703, while the resistance of the Protestants of Languedoc, in the defence of their lives and families, and with the fond hope of obtaining religious liberty, was at its height, the Marshal Montrevel conceived a plan, which, one would have thought, human nature, degraded as it is, would shudder at. He found the opposition to his arms was not to be overcome, that the natural fast-

* Historical.

nesses, in which the insurgents concealed themselves, could not be forced by troops unacquainted with the country, and he therefore proposed to destroy all the towns and villages, scattered over an immense surface of the Upper Cevennes, which might afford them harbour and protection, and transport their wretched inhabitants to the nearest Catholic towns. The execution of this order was committed to Field-Marshal Julian. Four hundred and sixty-six hamlets or villages, containing upwards of twenty thousand inhabitants, were doomed to destruction. The king forbad the massacre of this multitude of innocent sufferers;—admirable instance of humanity! as if death itself were not preferable to the anguish, the bodily suffering, poverty, and certain ruin attendant on such an expulsion, from all the heart of man holds sacred, and in

which tender females, enfeebled age, and helpless childhood, as well as more enduring manhood, were to participate.

The soldiers at first marched to their labour of extermination with alacrity, and the miserable people they came to drive from their homes, fled at their approach, many being forced into rebellion by their fears. On every side, the destruction proceeded, the rocks re-echoed to the sound of axes and levers, and the bursting of trains of gunpowder, proclaimed the progress of the work of iniquity afar through the desert. But these means were too slow for Julian's impetuous zeal. The distance of the habitations, placed sometimes in almost inaccessible situations, on the craggy points of rocks, in hollow abyssess, or amid impenetrable woods, wearied the patience and ex-

hausted the time and strength of the destroyers; food also was wanting, and famine and sickness began to avenge the innocent victims of their brutal rage. An order from Court seconded his wishes, and the whole country was doomed to form one vast funeral pile, on which they vainly trusted to immolate the never-dying spirit of freedom. A blast from hell itself could scarcely have been more dreadful in its effects; all fell before the activity of the fire, as the trees of the forest, when the lightning from Heaven strikes them, and they kindle at its touch, reddening the sky with the glare. Nor was slaughter wanting to complete the scene of desolation; the miserable inhabitants, who, in the wildness of their despair, remained to witness the loss of their homes, were murdered without mercy; some even who were guilty of no other offence than

choosing a retreat not prescribed to them by their oppressors.

Nothing remained to mark that the hand of man had ever made this wilderness to smile, but here and there the massy arched vaults, which form the foundation of the houses in that country, blackened with smoke and flame; they long stood as so many memorials of the fatal act. Hither some poor wretches, after a lapse of years, dragged their feeble limbs, to weep over the ruin of their native soil, and with the fond piety that lingers round the abodes of our forefathers. By degrees new hamlets were raised around their ruins, and a thinly scattered population returned to people the waste.—Can any thing but Christian principle teach them to forget their fathers' wrongs, or obliterate from their minds the memory of so much suffering?

It was in the midst of regions so well suited to her sorrows, that Vidal now sought the wretched Louise, guided by a report of a person answering to her description, having been seen, in the depth of winter, ascending the road which branches off either to the Mont Causse or the Alte Fage, one of the highest of that chain of the Lozere mountains, and so called from a mass of beech-wood, with which it is crowned. The way was dreadful, and rendered more difficult to the traveller, from the shade of the forests through which it was cut, and which, though still leafless, made the dusky evening appear yet more gloomy. A heavy snow was falling, the cold was so intense, that the Consul was forced to alight, and Simon, unused to exposure in such a climate, felt with surprise and apprehension, that it became congealed in

his long straggling locks. There were added to the horrors of the scene, the dismal roar of winter torrents, which form the sources of many well-known streams, that afterwards bear their tribute to the ocean or the Mediterranean.

Several hours had yet to pass, before the rising of the moon, and in this dreary state, ignorant of their exact situation, it was no cheerful prospect to look forward to passing the night without food or fire. Simon was the first to break silence, in bitter lamentations and regrets of the comforts of home, of which, he was in general pretty regardless, while the hot tears poured down his frozen cheeks, and he mingled with his complaints loud protestations that nothing, if he had the happiness of returning to Vallerargues, should ever tempt him so far from it again. The Consul, whose courage increased by com-

parison, severely reprimanded his faint-hearted companion.

" Why, man, pluck up a little spirit, I say ; what a pretty soldier you'd make, if a dark night terrifies you so much."

" Please your honour," said Simon, " I never had any relish for that profession ; and, besides, in all the marchings and counter-marchings I ever heard of, they never seemed to suffer more than I do now. Why the teeth make a noise against each other, like shrivelled nuts in their shells. They must have had a warm Christmas here, if our proverb holds good ; for, you know, it says, ' Quam per nada on soureyo per Pasque brulo ta legno.' Besides, I have not tasted a morsel since the morning, and I shiver so, that I cannot hold the bottle straight to my mouth, but spill it right and left, as if good brandy was as plenty as water in this outlandish place."

"Can't you indeed?" cried the Consul, —"I wish I had known before that you were so provident: let me have a try,—my hand is steadier, and I shall see clearer with a little of it to thaw me."

"When I have taken my share, and welcome," said Simon, "but I must first reward myself for my care. Hist! master! what's that noise I hear? Can it be a wolf? St. Joseph protect us!" he added, crossing himself. "But now I begin to think of wolves, what a number of stories about them come into my head!—and this is the very place and time of year to meet them."

"And if we should, you blockhead," cried the Consul, "I hope they would make a meal of you,—a far easier death than dying of fear, as you seem inclined to do. But, wolves or not, I am determined to find a shelter for the night; so

do you hold my mule while I fire a pistol, and the report may perhaps bring some one to our relief."

"And then," said Simon, trembling with still greater alarm, "they'll take us for banditti, and murder us without a question. Pray, master, wait a little, for I do think I see a smoke!"

"See a smoke, you fool," replied the Consul, "in such a snow as this! See a light, and I will say something to you."

"And what will you give me," cried Simon, "if I do?"

"Why," returned his master, "what you deserve, for not seeing it before; for 'there it is!'" exclaimed both at once, as faint glimmer appeared at some distance through the thick atmosphere.

They proceeded, as speedily as the slipperiness of the ground would permit, to approach it, and happily discovered

that it issued through the ill-closed shutters of a cottage, which stood the first of a small scattered village, the outline of several houses of the same description appearing not far off. Vidal was for demanding immediate admittance, with the authority of one accustomed to command; but Simon withheld his arm, with his usual caution, as he was about to thunder on the door, and begged permission first to peep in at the window, and judge if the people within were more or less to be dreaded than the wolves without.

He did so, and perceived, seated round a large fire, which burned in the middle of the apartment, a family of mountaineers, finishing their frugal meal, and conversing a jargon that sounded harsh to lowland ears. The patriarch of the group, his countenance worn by age and evident suffering, was relating what appeared

peculiarly to interest his auditors, as their tears and uplifted hands bore evidence to their sympathy. One young girl, whose mean apparel did not obscure her extreme beauty, seemed more especially affected. Her mother shook her head in mild sadness. The father looked at his daughter, and pressed more closely to his bosom a pair of lovely children, who gazed with astonishment at the sorrow they witnessed. The only one of the party who appeared insensible to what was passing, was an old deaf grandame, spinning in one corner, and humming a low and monotonous ditty to cheer herself at work. What was the furniture of the place it was difficult to distinguish, as thick volumes of smoke eddied round and round, in search of other apertures besides an open chimney over the fire; but, after attentive observation, Simon discerned, at the other end, a

couple of cows and a few sheep lying tran quilly on their seldom-disturbed litter, and at least contributing their share to the warmth of the common apartment.

Having sufficiently reconnoitred the premises, he next proceeded to follow his master's orders, and knock lustily at the door. His summons was answered by the barking of two immense dogs, that had been undiscovered in the straw, and now made their presence known by a vociferation, which the screams of the women, the threats of the men, and entreaties of the children, could with difficulty silence.

Simon, who, at the sound of the commotion he had unwittingly occasioned, had slunk close to the wall, in order not to be the first to appear as the door opened, wished himself far away from the confusion, and could not be prevailed upon

to enter the cottage till he saw one mastiff withheld by the sturdy strength of the mountaineer, who seized him by his iron-spiked collar, and his companion, awed by a few well-applied strokes of a cudgel, slink again to his hiding-place, to snarl undisturbed, and display his sharp white teeth at the strangers.

It was some time before this cessation of hostilities was obtained; but no sooner had the good people understood that two benighted travellers requested their hospitality, than they proceeded, with friendly alacrity, to make the best provision in their power to receive them. One drew the weary mule to bear company with the other four-footed inhabitants of the apartment, and shook down before her a fresh bundle of hay; another took off the Consul's dripping roquèlaure and hat, and supplied their place with a coarse shep-

herd's cloak; a third proceeded to collect such provisions as the place afforded; in short, all were anxious, without inquiring whom they served, to employ themselves for the strangers, desirous of no other recompense than the consciousness of having relieved their fellow-creatures.

Simon was not displeased to sit down and be waited upon, and found his spirits rise at the sight of food and fire.

As the beds were few in number, and not very inviting in appearance, Vidal preferred sitting up during the night round the blazing hearth, which the master of the cottage undertook to keep well supplied with fuel. By degrees, the females of the family and the children retired to rest, the latter repeating a short prayer, and imploring their parents' blessing. The dogs had growled themselves to sleep and the rest of the party, being pro-

vided with pipes, sat for some time silent, as the Consul had already exhausted his thanks, and the recital of his adventures. After many fruitless attempts, which honest Simon made, to renew the conversation, and which only drew forth short answers in reply, he happily thought of inquiring, what had so earnestly engaged their attention, as to prevent their hearing the footsteps of the mule on their arrival.

"As to that, friend," replied the younger host, "the snow is as good as a down cushion for treading softly upon; but if you had made a clattering like the wolves in December, I doubt if we should have heard it, for what my father was telling took up all our thoughts."

"Indeed!" said Simon.—"Some murder, or ghost story, I suppose; such a one as makes me creep into bed, as if the shaking fit of an ague was upon me."

"No," replied his host, "it was nothing so wonderful. We were only talking about a poor mad woman, whom my father used to see in her happier days, when he was in the habit of going down to the Lowlands; and as I was telling him I met her a few days ago, one word drew on another, and my Janette must needs hear something of her history. We were in the middle of it when you knocked, and our dogs, who are good guards, and not much used to strangers at this season, set up their howling."

Vidal was struck by what he said, and determined, however unpleasant the subject might be to his feelings, to gather all the information possible, that could enable him to discover if this was the object of his search. He, therefore, after nogging and winking to Simon, to ensure his silence, ventured to ask if they were acquainted with her name and family.

"I believe we are," said the old man, "but I see no reason why a stranger should be so too; you'll forgive my boldness, I hope; her history is but too common, and shame be to the gentlemen, as they call themselves, that it should be so; but they feel no more than stocks and stones, till they've daughters of their own, and then sometimes it comes home to them." He proceeded to relate, with simple eloquence, what common report had spread of Louise's wrongs, adding that she frequently travelled round to their village, where she was always sure of a welcome. "I cannot, at this moment," continued the old mountaineer, "remember the name of her seducer, but perhaps it is better I should not, for I would not wish to curse him, villain as he is."

"Pray," said Simon, with eager and indiscreet curiosity, "might it happen to be Vidal?"

"Ah, Vidal, that is it," replied the mountaineer, "but may I ask, young man, how you came to know it so well? is he unfortunately one of your friends?"

Vidal, who sat on thorns during this dialogue, gave the unfortunate Simon such a well applied prick with his spur, a hint he felt sure would not be unattended to, that he screamed out with the pain.

"What's the matter?" inquired Vidal, with a look of counterfeit surprise.

"Oh, my leg, master!" cried Simon, grasping the afflicted part.

"Well, fellow! and what of your leg; you've got the cramp, I suppose, with the cold, but there's no need of screaming so loud; can't you answer the question put to you?"

"Yes, yes," said Simon, "I think I know the man you mean; is he not short,

ill-favoured, with hanging brows, and grey eyes, and ———?"

Another prick, more violent than the first, made him jump almost a foot from his seat, and, turning his eyes on his master, he saw in his countenance, a momentary glance of so diabolical a cast, as instantly checked his volubility.

"You are sadly troubled with the cramp, friend," said the younger mountaineer; "I think I must waken up our mother, she has all sorts of cures for such complaints."

Simon, who, even when really ill, had a great abhorrence of pharmacy in all its branches, thought it no joke to be cured when nothing was the matter with him, and he begged he would not give himself the trouble, as it would go off without, by the aid of another bumper.

"But this Vidal," continued the old

man,—"is he, or is he not, a friend of yours?"

"Friend!" exclaimed Simon, draining his glass as he spoke; "no, indeed, I can assure you, I wouldn't own him as such. I have seen him, I own, at fairs and markets, in the way of my calling, riding about on his old dappled ———" prudence checked the rest.

"And what is generally thought of him?" said his host.

"Why," replied Simon, "he has the character of being a great rascal, a cheating, lying, mean-spirited scoundrel." Here he stole a look at the Consul, whose face exhibited an odd mixture of offended pride, and amusement at the method he had taken for concealment.

"That's right," exclaimed the old man, who appeared the most earnest against him: "and what do they think he deserves for his pains?"

"They think," said Simon, pleased with the opportunity of revenging himself, "that he should be dragged through a horsepond, whipped round the market-cross, and hung up at the lantern, as a warning to others;—and, if they once begin, I think I could not, for the life of me, refuse to lend a helping hand."

"You're a brave fellow for that," cried the elder mountaineer, "and shall have another glass for your honesty. Nay, we'll all fill, and drink confusion to all betrayers of innocence and grinders of the poor."

Vidal could not excuse himself from joining in the toast, though his voice faltered a little, as he repeated the words.

Simon, who considered that he had now sufficiently secured himself from any danger to his bones, should his connexion with the Consul be discovered, proceeded to make all possible inquiries respecting

the route taken by the poor maniac, on her last leaving the village.

"It is difficult to say," replied the younger host, "as she follows no guide but her own fancy and inclination. There is a young man, sometimes goes with her, and brings her back; he's at my house very often, oftener, indeed, than I could wish; but just now he's gone with a few sheep belonging to a neighbour of mine, to pick up a little grass lower down in the mountains, for they say it's beginning to spring there. Whatever is to be known about her, he can best tell you, provided he's in the humour for talking, which is not always the case."

"Who did you say the lad was?" said the Consul.

"I was going to tell you," replied the mountaineer, "that I never knew, nor ever could hear of any one that did; he's

as great a rover as Louise herself, and cannot be brought to fix himself to any employment. They came to this country together; but where she picked him up I pretend not to say. They seem, sometimes, fond of each other, but it's in a way unlike other people, and he's so stern in his manner, that one would think it was his right to play the part of master. Stern as he is, the young girls, I believe, are bewitched about him, though he seems to care only for one, and that one I'd as soon he'd let alone."

"Has the young man no name?" said Vidal.

"We call him Pierre," replied the other, "I believe, because he first came on St. Peter's Day. Whether he has any other christening, I cannot say. The poor woman sometimes calls him Charles, but there's no judging from that. There

are gossips here who think that in one of her wild freaks, she stole him from some great people; for though he's poor, he's as proud as a duke, and seems not born to toil and serve as we are; but I am loath to suspect her of making so much misery. If you wish to see him, Sir, I can find a man to conduct you to the hermitage where his flock is feeding."

"Not without it's on my way home," answered the Consul, carelessly; "I have no great curiosity on the subject."

"Just as you please," said his host; and finding it was growing late, he soon followed the good example of Simon, who already gave notice of his being in a state of profound repose.

Not so the Consul; if drowsiness for a moment surprised him, it did not interrupt the effect of the mountaineer's words, which was heightened by the wild vagaries

that accompany short and broken slumbers. At one time, he fancied himself still reclining by the expiring embers, Louise herself bending over him, and rousing his hosts to fulfil their threats; at another, the young shepherd, Pierre, seemed to seize him with resistless force, and he already felt his breath shortening, and the light flash from his eyes, as in the agonies of suffocation. Then again, the scene shifted to the splendour of the Castle of Vallerargues: his injured patron, haggard and pale with sickness, and his lady, clothed in the mournful garments of the tomb, stood before him, and in appalling accents, called upon him to account for the state in which they found their child. That the young man he had just heard of, was the Baron's son, Vidal was strongly inclined to suspect. He had never thoroughly believed the account

of his sudden disappearance, but pertinaciously imagined that Louise had secreted him, and feigned an accusation against himself, in order to lull his suspicions. This idea was confirmed by his finding the most minute search ineffectual; and the absence, if not death, of Mons. Brunel from that period, had prevented his examining him on the subject. Thus he flattered himself, at least one part of his labour was accomplished, and the only difficulty that remained, was to engage the youth to follow him; of the extent of this he could form no idea till he had seen him, and notwithstanding his pretended unconcern, he determined that this should be his first object on the succeeding day. As his thoughts assumed a more certain purpose, his sleep became sounder; and the chilliness of the morning air, together with the

bleating of the sheep, awakened the Consul to those strange sensations of astonishment and uncertainty, which succeed a night spent in a place and manner so unusual.

CHAPTER VIII.

Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
And inaccessible, by shepherds trod,
In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
A hermit lived, a melancholy man,
Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains.
Douglas.

After rubbing his eyes for some time, and allowing the first burst of recollection to pass off, Vidal perceived that the inhabitants had left the cottage to pursue their usual occupations, and that none remained behind but a little girl who was foddering the flock. With some difficulty he aroused the still sleeping Simon, and dragged him, yawning and shivering, into the open air. "And now, Sirrah," demanded the Consul, as soon as they were

sufficiently withdrawn from observation, "tell me if you do not deserve this whip on your shoulders, for your impudence last night?"

"Well," cried Simon, chuckling with pleasure at the recollection, "if I didn't think you meant to thank me for keeping your secret so well; but that's what a man gains for speaking the truth for his friend."

"Do you call that the truth, you villain," said the Consul, "and to my face, too."

"I'll call it what you please," said Simon, "but, next time, you may shift for yourself."

"And pray," said the Consul, "what good did I derive from your services; wouldn't it have done as well, if you had put in a good word for me?"

My conscience wouldn't let me," replied Simon; "besides, no one would have

believed me, for I'd venture to swear you won't go to purgatory for the sin of hypocrisy; you're well known for what you are, and I should only have got myself into a scrape, as one of your sort."

"You shall pay for your insolence, you scoundrel, if I live to see home agian," cried the Consul, "but now I have other things to attend to. You heard what the old man said last night of the shepherd-boy, Pierre, I think he called him?"

"Yes," replied Simon, "I did hear a sort of something, between sleeping and waking; I thought it was a dream: now you speak of it, I was thinking ——"

"Who gave you leave to think?" said the Consul.

"Gently, master," replied Simon, "I always thought a man had liberty to think, at least, without leave of the King. If you had not been so ready to stop me, I

should have told you, that it struck me, this might be the young Baron there has been some talk about lately; and as some folks are good enough to say you made away with him, if he is found to be alive, it may save your conscience many a twinge, and your character a stain, which is no small matter."

The Consul scarcely knew how to answer his Squire; he found he had one of a most ungovernable species to deal with—too weak to be trusted, and to cunning to be blindfolded; he contented himself, therefore, with treating Simon's suggestion as a mere fancy, protesting he had merely asked the question to learn if he remembered where their host had mentioned the boy was to be found, as he had reasons for becoming acquainted with him, which he had not time that morning to explain, and must be kept secret for

the present; he desired him, therefore, to abstain from all further remarks, and simply obey his orders, without endeavouring to discover their motives, promising him, as a recompense of his discretion, full pardon for the transgressions he had been guilty of since they left home.

Whether Simon's bow spoke that he was convinced, or that he was submissive, it is difficult to determine, but he followed his master in silence to the cottage, where the party of the preceding evening were seated ready for breakfast, with the addition of a young man, who had a basket of tools beside him, and appeared equipped for a journey.

"Good morrow, friends," said the younger host, "you are stirring early this fine morning; but a man is not long getting about, when he has not a bed to turn out of. Come, take something before

you start; and as you are for the low country, there's the person I was speaking of last night, who can be your guide, for he's going there himself, and they say good company shortens a lover's league."

"I thank you," said Vidal, "and shall be glad of his directions, for I have never travelled this road before, and if he is inclined to pass near the hermitage you mentioned, it will the better please me; for I love to say an Ave in the company of such holy men."

The traveller assured him it was on their way, as the summer road was still impracticable.

After a hearty meal, which Simon, as usual, took care to prolong far on the road, the Consul repeated his thanks for the hospitality they had received, and nowise sorry to find all other remuneration was refused, mounted his mule, and

proceeded along the path which led in the opposite direction to that which they had traversed the night before.

The morning was sharp, but beautiful to the eye ; at distant intervals appeared cottages perched like the eagle's nest on the lofty summits of the heights, or secured in the deep ravines beneath. The snow had not as yet felt the influence of the sun, and hung in light wreaths upon the branches of the beech and firs. Here and there a woodman employed in cutting the dead boughs, a shepherd seeking moss and dry leaves for his flock, or a travelling pedlar carrying his glittering stores to tempt the damsels of the mountains, enlivened the scene, furnishing Simon, also, with subjects of conversation, which he seldom failed to improve ; and they had not proceeded many miles from Fraissinet de Fourques, the village which had

afforded them shelter, before he had talked himself into an intimacy with Gaspard, their new guide. He told him what were considered the best fairs, where his employment as a tinker was most in requisition, what employers he might trust, and who should be dealt with warily, if he did not wish to labour without reward. In short, whether from an ambition of patronising, or a wish to oblige, his information was so kindly given, that Gaspard could not refuse being on his part equally communicative in satisfying the valet's curiosity, which was principally excited by the Hermit, whom his master, notwithstanding his usual profane raillery, was seized with an unaccountable desire to visit.

"Of his history," said Gaspard, "little is known; his name is Brother Francis Gabriel, and men judge by his mortifica-

tions that he must have led a very bad life; no very charitable conclusion, I must say. All I know is, that he lives much to himself, and never suffers a woman to come near his cell."

"A wise resolution," said Simon, "if he has anything to keep secret. But pray what connexion is there between this reverend father and the young shepherd, who, it seems, seeks out his company?"

"None that I know of," said Gaspard, with a look of much surprise, "except the good herbage near the hermitage; besides, how should there be, when they say that Pierre is not a Christian, not even a Protestant, as the most of us are in these mountains. Mark me, I don't speak from my own knowledge, but so says common report; and that if he worships anything it must be the sun. I

have heard my grandfather say, when he was a young man, he had a herd, who never was known to enter a church or go to confession; and as he was uneasy about the lad, he asked him one day, what religion he was of, and whether he ever said his prayers. The lad bluntly told him, he did when the sun shone; and I have heard his prayer too, but I forget it; it was all to the bright planet. My grandfather, out of care for his soul, prevailed on him to go the Curé. The first fine day he went, and found the Curé sitting with his books before him, ready to begin catechising.—He was not a whit daunted, but, seeing a sunbeam peeping in through a hole in the shutter, took off his shepherd's cloak, and threw it on it, and it hung as if on a peg. Never was there a man so surprised as the Curé, so he bid him go about his business, for that

he could not do so much with all his learning."

"If he'd had to deal with our Curé," said Simon, "he might not have come off so well; for he doesn't find a greater fault in a man than being wiser than himself."

Simon was not to be put off his inquiries by this story, especially as he saw that the Consul was listening to their conversation, and begged for some further information respecting Pierre.

"It's now ten years," said Gaspard, "since he was first seen at Fraissinet; the winter was colder even than it is now, and we were so short run of provisions that the old ones began to watch every mouthful we ate, and preach against waste from morning to night.—One evening, when we were close shut up in our houses, this boy came down the street, wasted

like a skeleton, without hat or shoes, and treading on the snow as if he had hoofs like a horse. No one cared to open their doors, till little Jeanette, Andore's daughter, whom you saw last night, cried so bitterly, that her mother, to please her, let him in to warm himself, and gave him some bread and cheese to eat. They could get little out of him, and he soon ran away with it. So it went on for a week; at last, they determined on following him, and traced him to a cave at some distance, almost blocked up with snow; and, on looking in, there was, in one corner, a poor creature covered up with all the clothes he could spare from himself, and appearing ready to perish. The boy threw his arms round her neck when he came in, and tried to make her eat the supper he had saved; he then laid down close to her, as if to preserve

her life by the warmth of his body. When Andore told us this, the whole village felt that it was a shame to them to suffer such a thing; and as she was too ill to be removed, they sent covering and food, and wood to the cave; and though our provisions were before so scanty, they lasted us out till spring."

"Did the woman die?" said Simon.

"No," replied Gaspard, "she got well as the weather grew warm; but she was very bad in her head then, and she is so still. We took very much to the boy, and a fine hardy fellow he has grown up; why he makes nothing of bringing a litter of young wolves in his cloak, without caring whether he meets the dam or not,"

That's a strange taste," said Simon, "but I care not how long he pursues the sport, so as he does not ask me to assist him."

In such discourse they proceeded till towards evening, when fatigue and hunger induced them to stop for the night at a poor-looking dwelling, where a large juniper-bush suspended over the door, invited travellers to seek rest and refreshment. The former might have been enjoyed, had not Vidal, who was extremely particular about his entertainment, when he had to pay for it, kept up such a bustle as prevented any in the house from sleeping till a late hour. It was not, therefore, so early as he intended that they set forward again on their journey; and as the heat of the noonday sun began, in these lower regions, to dissolve the snow, the road was rendered almost impassable, and the evening was again drawing in, when Gaspard announced that they approached the hermitage of Brother Gabriel.

For some time, the thickness of the

trees, and the numerous windings in the road, had prevented their seeing far in advance, and the large stones imbedded in slimy mud, that lay on the way, required all their attention to keep their footing in such a rapid descent. At length, on turning an abrupt angle of the rock, round which they had to pass, a scene of wild magnificence appeared, such as the hand of nature alone can create, and man may admire without presuming to imitate.

The narrow valley which presented itself was bounded by frowning cliffs, clothed towards their summits with woods, chiefly of chestnut, whose beautiful light green foliage was in the more sheltered spots just beginning to appear. Down the sides of these cliffs, numerous small streams, like lines of silver, found their way; several of them uniting at the upper

end of the valley, had worn a passage of some width over an immense mass of rock that raised a frowning barrier there, and, after flowing uninterruptedly for the space of a few hundred yards, they fell in sheets of foam and clouds of vapour, a depth that the eye could scarcely fathom, and rolled their clear tide along the valley, chafing against every obstacle that opposed its passage. Across this rock, in ancient days, a wooden bridge had been thrown, and a steep and narrow pathway led to the hermitage on the opposite side, whose entrance was only distinguished from other yawning chasms near it, by a rude cross placed over it by the devotion of its possessor. Before it, lay a level space of some extent, which presented the appearance of an under cliff, rent from the mountain by some violent convulsion of nature, and exhibiting the

scanty marks of renewed vegetation. In the valley, a few sheep and goats were seen feeding, but so distant, that they appeared like specks upon the green herbage, and the shepherd seemed to dwindle to an infant's stature. The whole of the lovely scene was illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, and little as the minds of our travellers were accustomed to dwell on the charms of nature, it was a scene that for some minutes rivetted their attention. Simon was the first to speak: "this is very beautiful, I must confess, but it's like the ups and downs of life; give me a little plain ground, where a man may walk peaceably on, without being afraid of breaking his neck every step he takes. There is one gentleman in a hollow so deep, that if one were to slide down to him, there seems little chance of being able to leave

his company should it prove disagreeable; and as for the other, who I take it, is perched in some snug hole on the opposite side, he can have no visiters but the eagles, for, without wings, I don't see it is possible to get at him.—Do you see, master, that the bridge we ought to cross is broken?"

They turned their eyes immediately in the direction he pointed, and perceived, not without some dismay, that his remark was just, and that one of the arches had given way during a late flood; but while they were consulting on what were the best means to pursue, the shepherd and his flock were seen slowly ascending the height, by a pathway invisible to unaccustomed eyes. His voice soon became audible, as, in rough accents, he called his sheep by their names, and threatened or encouraged them by turns. "Aya!

Aya! se, venes la! Migrette! gourmande; gallavarda! Hessida! broute, broute Roussillette; ah! Marquissas! la Fitte, Jaques, la!" and similar exclamations, were heard; and after disappearing for some time among the underwood, he leaped from a rising bank, which bounded the road, followed by his sheep, for whose convenience he carefully removed every obstruction. They stood round him with the patience and docility common to their race, and the attentive submission they display in those countries, where the shepherds, passing their days and nights in the field, are familiarized with each individual of their flock.

For some time, the party thus assembled mutually surveyed each other; and if the shepherd, whom the Consul immediately guessed to be Pierre, wondered at their appearance there, they were no less

struck with his firm athletic form, his strongly-turned limbs, and the daring look that appeared in his sunburnt features. Contrary to the custom of the country, he wore no covering on his head, and his dark hair, rather matted than curled, gave an air of savage wildness to his countenance. His dress was shabby, and a large coarse grey cloak hung from his shoulders. At his side was a wallet, covered with goat-skin, a dried gourd serving the purpose of a bottle, and in his hand a stout staff instead of a crook.

In the mean time, Gaspard, who had been sent to examine the state of the bridge, returned with intelligence, that with great care, it was passable; and on seeing Pierre, saluted him as an old acquaintance, relating the circumstances which led to their being at that hour in

so wild a place, and their intention of seeking a shelter in the hermitage.

Pierre took little notice of what he said, but, turning to the Consul, inquired if he had reason to suppose Father Gabriel would wave in his favour the resolution he had taken to receive no strangers. The Consul could urge no claim on his hospitality, and proposed his accompanying him forward to see what reception they were likely to meet with, leaving Simon and Gaspard to accomplish the difficult task of leading the mule over the broken arch. To this he agreed, after securing his flock in a hovel of loose stones; and desiring the Consul to follow, walked on with a step that seemed to shake the very earth on which he trod.

Vidal, desirous of engaging his new acquaintance in conversation, began some trifling questions, but his replies were

short and impatient, like the expressions of a man who, having no curiosity himself, cannot tolerate it in others; and he appeared more anxious to display his Herculean strength, as he removed the masses of stones which the rush of the torrent had thrown on the road.

The Consul augured ill, from his manner, for the success of his expedition: it did not seem likely, when his chief excellency lay in bones and sinews, that repose and ease would have any charms for him, or that, accustomed like the wild ass to snuff the wind of the desert, he should easily be brought to submit his will to the control of another.

It was with great difficulty they reached the other side of the bridge, just as the bell of the hermitage tinkled the hour of the Angelus, and at the same moment the sun's broad disk, sinking behind the

western cliff, left the whole sky one deep red. The Consul, crossing himself with much apparent devotion, repeated an Ave Maria, and Pierre remained motionless till he had ended.

In order to lead to the subject of his wishes, Vidal inquired if the hermitage did not, as Gaspard had informed him, depend on the priory of St. Roc.

"It is very possible," said Pierre, "but it imposes on the brother who occupies it no submission. During the life of his predecessor, indeed, such a claim was established; but Brother Gabriel is not a man to acknowledge a superior, not even if the Prior himself were to come in person and assert his claim."

"There could be no disgrace, however," said Vidal, "in such a submission; and as I know the Prior of St. Roc extremely well, I can venture to say, that a

dependence on him is perhaps more honourable than independence. I may boast of being as well acquainted with him as most persons are; nor was I, to say the truth, less in the confidence of his brother-in-law, the Baron de Courcy.

Pierre, who had walked on a few steps, turned quickly round as he pronounced the name, and coming up to him with a look of evident astonishment, said—"And who are you, Sir, who pretend yourself the friend of such a man?"

"You shall be easily satisfied," said Vidal, "if you will but first inform me what interest it can excite in your mind."

"I will have no bargaining," said Pierre, sternly. "A name almost forgotten by the world cannot have been uttered by chance."

Vidal was hesitating what reply to

make, when they were struck by sounds of distress and alarm proceeding from the bridge; and Pierre, seeming to forget his purpose, sprung quickly from him, and ran to discover the cause. Vidal followed more slowly, and on arriving at the broken arch, found Simon tearing his hair, and distorting himself with every violence of gesticulation, while Gaspard endeavoured to comfort him, and, with eager eyes, looked on the torrent below, and on the undaunted shepherd, who was already, by means of the hanging brushwood, swinging himself down the most abrupt side of the rock.

"What's the matter, you blubbering fool?" exclaimed Vidal, alarmed and surprised at the scene.

"Matter enough," said Gaspard.

"Oh!" cried Simon, "the perversity of that mule!"

"What of my mule—I hope she is safe?" eagerly inquired the Consul.

"That's more than I can tell," said Simon, "till yonder stripling brings up the news. But it's all your own fault, master, I must say; you should have taught the beast to be less stubborn, or you should have taken her over with you, since you are more used to her ways, and left me to take care of myself, which is the utmost I was ever good for, as my wife tells me."

"And when am I to know what has happened?" demanded the angry Consul.

"You'll know it but too soon," said Gaspard, coolly: "your mule made a false step, in coming over this awkward place, and she has fallen down the waterfall, which is sure death to man and beast."

A volley of oaths, and some sound

lashes from his riding-whip applied to the shoulders of the luckless valet, was the Consul's reply.

Simon vociferated lustily as he crouched under the discipline, entreating his master not to be so inhuman, but to listen to the rights of the story.

"And what more can I hear," cried the Consul, after hearing that your carelessness has lost me a mule, that cost me thirty double crowns?"

"And it was thirty years ago, I believe," said Simon; "but if she cost a hundred, I can prove that the fault was not in me, but in your own maxims. Ask Gaspard if I did not coax and argue with her, and stroke her in vain,—not a step would she move: so, finding fair words of no avail, I thought, as I have often heard you say yourself, Sir, that hard blows would answer better, and I struck her

smartly. To be sure she did begin to move fast enough, for she was down in the valley before I could cry *pecaire!*"

"I wish, with all my heart, you had been on her back," cried the Consul.

They leant, as far as safety would permit, over the railing, but the foam of the water prevented their seeing any object distinctly; and the appearance of the young shepherd climbing the steep with the same agility he had descended, put an end to whatever faint hope might yet remain. He bore the mule's accoutrements in his hand, and assured the Consul that a couple of eagles already hovered over their prey.

"Farewell, poor Grizzy!" ejaculated Simon, in a dolorous tone of voice; "we have served and suffered long together, and you have left me a hard legacy, if I may judge by the specimen I have just received."

As there was no remedy, the Consul put the saddle and bridle on Simon's shoulders, and they proceeded towards the hermitage; for in his heart he was not, in the midst of his anger, insensible to the benefit of having so good an excuse to allege for claiming a night's hospitality.

The whole party arrived as Brother Gabriel was rising from his evening's devotions. His salutation was humble, but he looked at the strangers with a cautious glance of suspicion, that gave an unpleasant appearance to his venerable countenance; then, turning to Pierre, he inquired the cause of this visit.

Vidal hastened to reply, and, stating their adventure, begged permission to pass the night under his roof.

The hermit shook his head, saying, "I am sorry it so occurs, for Christian charity will scarcely allow my turning

away the weary traveller, and yet you can hardly better your fate by remaining. A damp cold vault is the only shelter I can offer, and my fare is not only poor, but scanty."

Vidal protested such considerations were beneath his notice.

"Besides," added the Hermit, "this night is one of vigil with me,—I must not indulge in your society."

Still Vidal persevered in his request, and the Hermit, with a vexation he could ill conceal, found himself forced to receive them as his guests, whether he were inclined or no to play the part of an host. Muttering something of his being taken by surprise, and his mind engaged on more important matters, he led the way to his cell.

It was rude, as he represented it to be, and the damp streaming down the walls

made Simon's teeth chatter in his head. A broken table, on which lay a crucifix, together with a few musty, worm-eaten books, and some rough blocks of wood, formed the only furniture; and on one side, where the rock was blackened by the smoke, lay some dying embers, which the hermit almost extinguished, by throwing on them a heap of half-dried roots of trees.

"Good Father," said the Consul, looking round in some dismay, and drawing his roquelaure closer about him, "I cannot but admire your mortifications, though I should be sorry to imitate them; for a man might as well take possession of his tomb at once, as shut himself up during his life in such a place as this."

"Ah, my son," replied the Hermit, "it is thus you worldlings always talk: I warned you, before you entered, that it

would not suit your taste; but I should sooner have enticed you in, that here you may meditate on the deceitfulness of all that you most desire, and learn its worthlessness."

"Thanks for your kindness," said Vidal. "When I wish to make the discoveries you mention, I shall certainly come to you for counsel; but at present, in the vigour of life, with health, wealth, and a tolerable share of authority to boot, I should make but a curious contrast if I sat myself down beside your pale visage and spare mortified limbs."

"Health, wealth, and authority!" repeated the Hermit, who seemed fond of an opportunity to sermonise. "Is that all you can boast of? and a clear conscience, and peace of mind,—why are they not mentioned? Are they treasures too mean to be worth the counting: or are you like

the poor idiot, who gives his purse of gold for a few counters, contented without them."

The Consul looked as if he knew not whether to answer in jest or seriously, and at last said, "Come, Father, you are a little too hard upon me;—you could not press me more closely if I were already kneeling at your confessional;—you would not have me display these treasures, as you call them, like a vaunting spendthrift."

"My son," said the Hermit, if you possess them, I give you joy: you are safe without the austerities I practise; you can smile, even in the midst of peril; you can rejoice, though evil tidings come thick upon you, for you fear not the sting of remorse: it is that from which alone we cannot flee, for it fixes itself in our very heart's core, and its pangs no forget-

fulness can dissipate, no reflections charm away."

The Hermit paused, whether because the subject was exhausted, or that he had remarked the effect of his words on the Consul, seemed uncertain; but the latter inwardly rejoiced that the rapid approach of twilight made it difficult for his host to scrutinize his countenance.

Simon, however, though great part of the Hermit's discourse was unintelligible to him, not only perceived that it was displeasing to his master, but wearisome to himself; and, willing to change the subject to one more agreeable, took this opportunity of interfering. "Most Reverend Father Gabriel," he began, "since that is your style, it would not become me to interrupt you in the midst of a discourse, which is as fine as those we hear on festivals and saints' days; therefore,

if you have more to add, I will be silent, but if you have not, I must beg leave to remark, that though it is growing late, and hunger puts in her claim to attention, I perceive no symptoms of supper—no savoury smell assails my nose; and notwithstanding that I have been blowing this fire till my breath fails, I cannot produce even a spark. I would, therefore, fain know, if your night of vigil is a night of fast also, and if I, who have no intentions to watch, may not be permitted to eat?"

"Friend," replied the Hermit, "I have already told you your appetite was not in danger of being pampered here;—my simple fare does not require much assistance from cookery." So saying, he went to a small cupboard made in the rock, and took out a wooden bowl filled with cold boiled chestnuts, and the remains of

a brown loaf, together with an earthen jar, which he desired Pierre to fill from the fountain. These he placed on the table, and signifying that it was against his rule to eat with strangers, withdrew from the cell.

Though Simon had lowered his expectations as much as possible, he was not a little disappointed at this meagre fare; and no sooner was the Hermit's back turned, than he began to peep into every corner and crevice, in hopes of finding something more pleasing to his palate, but the search was vain: the cell opened, indeed, into others of larger dimensions and greater gloom, but they appeared entirely empty, and Simon was not sufficiently courageous to explore them alone. With many a wry face he sat down to the chestnuts, joined by Gaspard, who was too well used to mountain fare to

complain; and whenever he thought the latter sufficiently engaged not to notice what was passing, he drew from his pocket the black pudding which Perrette had so kindly bestowed upon him, and gave it a hearty bite.

CHAPTER IX.

I dream'd the spectre Death appear'd!
I dream'd his hollow voice I heard!
I gaz'd, when straight arose to sight
The most detested fiend of night.
From hell this frightful monster came,
Sin was his sire, and Guilt his name.
This Fury, with officious care,
Waited around his sovereign's chair,
In robes of terror dress'd the king,
And arm'd him with a baneful sting.

COTTON.

MEANWHILE Pierre, who was watching for an opportunity to speak to the Consul without being observed, whispered him, "Can you attend to me for a few minutes?"

"Willingly," replied the other, and followed him along a narrow path, that ascended to a smaller level of the rock, above the hermitage, from whence a still

more sublime and extensive view presented itself, now faintly visible by the light of myriads of sparkling stars. Here they stood, for a short time, silent: the nearer Vidal approached to the desired moment, the more numerous were the difficulties that offered themselves to his imagination. It was necessary to suit his proposition to the character and temper of the young man, which to his versatile genius might not be difficult, had he possessed any previous knowledge of what these were, to guide him; but Pierre's countenance chiefly marked unbending honesty, with a firmness somewhat allied to obstinacy,—qualities which Vidal had always found most difficult to deal with, as they required a straightforwardness he was averse to pursue.

Finding, however, that Pierre still continued silent, he ventured to inquire what

he had to ask or to communicate, that required such caution and privacy.

" First, then," said Pierre, " swear to answer me faithfully."

An oath never impeded the Consul's progress, nor was he troubled with the delicacy that might have led him to be offended at this implied doubt of his honour and veracity.

" Tell me," said Pierre, " why, as we ascended the height, you boasted, in so significant a manner, of having been the friend of the Baron de Courcy, whom I should have thought almost without a friend."

" I will answer you," said Vidal, " as briefly as possible. I wished to gain your attention to a circumstance that may concern you nearly. You may judge of his regard for me, when I tell you he confided to my superintendence his only

son, who, notwithstanding my utmost vigilance, was wrested from my protection. After a fruitless search, I was forced to mourn him as dead; but circumstances have not only of late convinced me this opinion was erroneous, but lead me to the certain conclusion, that you are the long-lost heir of that noble family."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Pierre. "Beware how you trifle with me!—remember your oath!"

"You might equally depend on me without it," said Vidal. "Do you think a bare surmise would have led me such a weary way as I have already travelled, in search of you? Besides, had I any hesitation, your noble appearance—the dignity of your manners—your superiority to the vulgar herd, would convince me that I am right."

"Peace with such vain babbling," said

Pierre, interrupting him, with a look of indignation, " or I shall disbelieve every word you utter. I know I am rough and untutored, blunt in speech, and unfit for polished life: if, as you say, and if, as at times it has been whispered to me, fortune has placed my path so high, I can see but too well that nature has not seconded her design. I am not yet prepared for high achievements, or a superior destiny; but the time may come, when glory shall be more familiar to my mind, and when I shall assert my birthright, if I have a birthright, by such a signal vengeance on my enemies, as shall compel all men to say I am not unworthy of the name you give me. Yet, before I indulge in these ideas, tell me what reason you have for encouraging me in such a belief."

Vidal, thus challenged, artfully related what was necessary to confirm his opinion,

not omitting the previous misfortunes of the Baron, and the probable suspicion that the unhappy Louise had carried off the child, in a fit of apprehension respecting his future destiny. In the whole account, truth was so artfully mingled with falsehood, that it would have been difficult for Pierre, even had he been better acquainted with the circumstances, to disentangle them.

The young shepherd listened with eagerness: his bosom appeared to swell, and his countenance to expand with intelligence, as the proofs brought forward by Vidal agreed more and more with what he had previously heard; and when the Consul ceased speaking, he stood for some time, with his hands clasped on his forehead, as if sunk in deep reflection. He then said, "What you have now told me answers, I must confess, to what I have

already gathered from the vague, though often contradictory hints, of one, too good wilfully to mislead me, yet too sorely afflicted to be implicitly relied on. I know not what to think, and still less do I know how to act."

"Then be guided by me," said Vidal. "Have you any reason to suspect me?"

"Certainly not," said Pierre, "nor as yet any cause for thinking you my friend."

"What!" exclaimed Vidal,—"Would any but a friend have used such pains and diligence in tracing you out?"

"Possibly not," replied Pierre; "but suspicion is one of the few lessons I have learned during my short life. Do not, however, be offended: you may be mistaken, but can hardly wilfully deceive, because nothing is to be gained by the deception, and human depravity is hardly so great, as to induce you to disgrace a

noble house, by forcing a stranger on its honours."

"Well, then," said Vidal, "if all you want is confirmation of my words, I can put you in a way to obtain it. The testimony of the Prior of St. Roc cannot be doubtful, since, in finding you, he finds an heir to the property he has so ably administered; yet he is not only willing, but desirous, of surrendering his rights to their lawful owner. All I ask is, that you should accompany me to him,—his heart yearns to acknowledge you. Suspend every investigation—check every anxious feeling, till you are in his presence; and if (which is, in fact, allowing an impossibility) he fail in convincing you that you were born to wealth and grandeur, I pledge myself to conduct you back to this desert, from whence I would so willingly draw you."

Here he stopped, but finding Pierre raised no objection to his scheme, pressed upon his attention the necessity of strict secrecy for the present, since a matter of so much moment ought not to become the subject of men's busy doubts and conjectures. The secrecy was soon promised; and Pierre, ignorant of the Prior's character, and simply supposing him guided by such rules of justice as all men profess to obey, was throwing himself blindly into the snare laid for him, when Vidal, with the innate meanness of a sycophant, willing to give the young Baron, as he termed him, a short taste of the pleasures of power, expressed a hope, that, when raised to the height of prosperity, he would not be unmindful of one who had not neglected him in adversity.

"I am little used to bestow favours," replied Pierre, "but surely my heart

must be ungrateful indeed, if I suffer the messenger of such good news to go unrewarded. Tell me, however, to whom I am so much indebted?"

"My name," replied the Consul, "is Dominic Vidal; I am Consul of Vallerargues, and Receiver to the Lord Prior of St. Roc, at your service."

Scarcely were the words uttered, when the countenance of the youth assumed a look of horror it is impossible to express, and he started back, as if a viper had suddenly turned under his foot.

"What is the matter?" said Vidal, rather alarmed. "Is there any thing in my name that terrifies you thus?"

"There is nothing about you can terrify me," said Pierre, contemptuously; "but there is that in your words,—nay, in your very look, that poisons the air in which you breathe. And could you dare address

yourself to me, false, deceitful, cold-hearted villain? Could you dare to stand the chance of my being ignorant of your crimes, or the still weaker chance, that with their history Louise did not infuse into my soul the thirst of unextinguishable revenge? Fool that I was, to be so blinded by ambition, as for a moment to give credit to your artful tale. Did you think I could be led to suppose one generous movement prompted your actions, or that you would do good if it were possible to do evil? No; now I see through the flimsy web, and I despise it. You thought that while I lived, there lived a revenger, who, sooner or later, would overtake you; and you hoped thus to lure me to destruction. Whether a high destiny awaits me, Heaven alone can determine; yet I would rather lead the life of a slave, than be conducted to freedom

and independence by your hand. But why do I waste my moments in vain reproaches, with such an object to stir my indignation before me? It is Providence that throws you into my power at the moment you hoped to have mastered me, and I must obey its voice."

So saying, with a sudden spring, he threw himself upon the astonished Consul, who, thus taken unawares, was unable to defend himself. Already had he lifted him from the ground and borne him to the edge of the rock, at the foot of which the loud rolling torrent seemed hoarsely calling for its prey. In vain the unhappy wretch, recollecting his last night's dream, struggled against a force that seemed to have paralyzed all his limbs, and with loud shrieks entreated for mercy. All was now over with him; and in that awful moment the horrors of an undone

eternity rushed upon his soul, and with unutterable anguish augmented the present agony.

One foot placed on the stump of an old tree that overhung the rock, Pierre stood with his victim suspended over empty space, and there wanted but the loosening of his grasp to precipitate him into the abyss, when he suddenly exclaimed,—"Has she not said, let him repent before he die?" The recollection saved the Consul's life. With the feelings of a man who flings a venomous reptile far from him, he threw him back again on the ground, and, as if afraid of trusting himself with another view of so hateful an object, rushed down the path, and in a moment had traversed the bridge. So rapid was his flight, that Gaspard and Simon, who ran from the Hermit's cell on hearing the screams, declared themselves

uncertain whether a spirit or a man had passed them, and on finding the Consul stretched on the ground, and half dead with terror, were ready to give credit to any story he was pleased to frame, in order to account for the state in which they saw him. He was led back to the cell, whither the Hermit had also returned, alarmed by his cries, and begged permission to retire immediately to repose, which was granted; and he was conducted, with his two companions, into an inner cave, where some dried leaves and musty straw were spread for couches.

Gaspard and Simon, stretching themselves in one corner, soon fell into a state of happy forgetfulness, but the Consul felt in his mind the perturbation of scarcely secure existence, and a sense of recent danger and present safety, too keen to afford unmixed pleasure. Even when his

ideas became more calm, and he could reflect on the circumstances which had just occurred, his feelings were those of despondency. A much longer space of time, than had been granted by the Prior, was now elapsed, and he seemed farther than ever from the success of his search. Yet he could form no plausible pretext to soften his patron's disappointment, and no plan occurred to him that promised to overcome his difficulties.

In the midst of the feverish restlessness that accompanied these musings, the hours of darkness rolled slowly by, and sleep seemed farther than ever from his eyes. It was not, therefore, without much surprise, that, in the middle of the night, when the Consul imagined even his host's vigil must be ended, he perceived a light in the outer cell, glimmering through a crevice in the rock, which, till then, he

had not perceived. Desirous of giving a new direction to his thoughts, and curious to observe the conduct of the Hermit, he softly placed himself so as to be able to look through the chink, and saw that Brother Gabriel had placed a lamp on the rude window of his cell, and was employed in rousing the mouldering embers, near which he had set the table, spread with much more inviting cheer than that which he had offered to the travellers. "Ah," thought the Consul, "the cunning old man keeps a joyous vigil in good sooth. I wonder not that he was unwilling to damp his appetite beforehand. I doubt not but the life of a recluse is agreeable enough in private, however rude the exterior may be."—The Hermit, having arranged all to his wish, lighted another lamp, and drew near the inner cell on tiptoe; nor was it without

some alarm that the Consul saw him enter, and approaching the two men, wave his lamp to and fro before their eyes, to be assured their slumber was sound; he next visited the Consul, who, half dead with fear, thought it most prudent to feign a profound sleep, and happily succeeded. After this inspection, he closed after him a heavy wooden door, which be bolted on the outside.

With his curiosity quickened by his apprehensions, the Consul again applied himself to the chink; but he was obliged to rub his eyes, and satisfy himself he was really awake, before he could give credit to what he saw. Three men soon after entered, in dress and air resembling the smugglers, who he well knew carried on a lucrative trade amongst the recesses of the mountains, and were received by the Hermit with a fraternal embrace, and

a significant sign to keep silence. The men looked surprised; but the Hermit, as appeared to the Consul, made them sensible they were not alone, and that the least noise might betray them. One of the men, thrusting his hand into his bosom, and stepping forward, seemed willing to adopt a summary mode of preventing mischief, but the others held him back, and on their host's invitation, they sat down to supper, where the indulgence of their voracious appetite made some amends for the restraint on their discourse, carried on only in whispers. Supper ended, they left the cell, and soon returned laden with some small barrels, tin cases, and bags, apparently containing shot, and to the Consul's extreme amazement, appeared to deposit them in the very heart of the rock; and, again going out, returned with several brace of pistols, old-

fashioned guns, daggers, and swords, which they concealed in the same manner. When all was finished, each tossed off a cup of what, from its effluvia, seemed a far different liquor from that which the fountain afforded, and again embracing the Hermit, and receiving his fresh instructions, they withdrew, jingling the money with which he had satisfied them. He stood at the door, till it was probable his ear no longer caught the faint echo of their steps ; then, extinguishing the light in the window, busied himself with effacing every trace that might be left of his nocturnal guests, and when his caution was satisfied, lay down to rest till the morning's dawn should rouse him to a life of mortification and constraint.

Surprise and fear yielded, in the Consul's bosom, to the pleasure he felt at having so important a communication to

make to his patron. He found it difficult to conceive, whether these strange intruders were, as their appearance bespoke them, smugglers, who frequently travelled through the country to supply the mountaineers with spirits, unencumbered with the heavy duties of excise, or miscreants who assumed their disguise for still more iniquitous purposes. There was another supposition, still more suited to his usual suspicious temper, and which, if satisfactory, would go far to prove, that he had not spoken at random, when he had, with the air of a man possessing important secret information, frequently declared to the Prior, that, in a short time, men would hear of what would astonish them, and filled his ear with endless conjectures of schemes and plots, which he was ready, by every petty act of tyranny in his power, to provoke. Though the pro-

vince of Languedoc was gradually subsiding into a state of tranquillity after the violent agitations by which it had been so long rent, during the struggles of the Protestants to obtain those privileges, of which even slaves are rarely deprived; yet, here and there, a few active spirits were still dispersed, whose zeal prevailed over their prudence, and whose wish to wrest justice from the hand of power, made them insensible to the inadequacy of the means they could employ. Nor was the state of the Protestants, though they still laboured under many disadvantages, such as authorized a recourse to violence. They were despised, though seldom persecuted; but this contempt, while it was perhaps harder to bear than open oppression, was not a sufficient motive to nerve the patriot's arm, or kindle the martyr's courage. According

to the temper of the magistrates, the persons of whom I am speaking, were either soothed into patience, or irritated into acts of violence, the effects of which always fell heavily on themselves; and the Consul of Vallerargues was so well aware which course he had pursued, that it was natural for him to foresee disturbances and insurrection. It was also well known, that smugglers had often been employed in former times to procure provisions and ammunition for the disaffected, and of late their number had been remarked to increase, which, added to the probability of his conjecture. At all events, whatever was the aim of these midnight votaries at the Hermit's cell, Vidal felt that the intelligence would be a powerful counterbalance in his favour, and amidst the floating projects that crowded into his imagination, he fell asleep with more agreeable

sensations than he had dared to hope would for some time visit him.

On awaking the next morning, the door was open. Simon and Gaspard had strolled out to enjoy the early freshness of a lovely day, and the hermitage presented so completely the appearance of the dwelling of a holy anchorite, while the Hermit met him with such a saintly and mortified demeanour, that the Consul was half inclined to think the smugglers, guns, and swords, but the phantoms of a disturbed imagination, and the effect of his last evening's alarm. However, he had too much reason for wishing the contrary, to indulge long in this fancy; and, after breakfast, without appearing to watch the Hermit's countenance too closely, he lamented the necessity he was under of still intruding on his hospitality, but professed, he found himself unable to pur-

sue his journey on foot, and therefore must beg permission to remain his guest until Simon should repair to Vallerargues for a mule, to replace that which his carelessness had lost.

Whether Brother Gabriel possessed great command of countenance, or that he was now indifferent if he remained or no, he received the declaration without discomposure, simply regretting that his vow of retirement would prevent his being a very sociable host.

The Consul next drew Simon aside, to tutor him for his expedition, which was no easy task. After recommending great despatch, he gave him a few lines, which he was to deliver to the Prior of St. Roc, and charging him not even to pass through Vallerargues, concluded with assurances of reward, if he was diligent, and of fearful punishment, should he delay his

return. At one moment, the Consul had some thoughts of being his own messenger; but, added to his fear of finding himself in the Prior's hands, without fulfilling his engagement, he thought it best to remain at the hermitage, as a spy on the proceedings that might be carried on.

Simon promised fair, and as he started no difficulties, and asked no questions, it was to be hoped he perfectly understood, and would correctly fulfil his charge. Sorely was his vanity tried by the numerous repetitions with which the Consul tutored him, lest his memory should prove treacherous; at length, he declared he had nothing more to add, and Simon took him at his word, remarking to his companion Gaspard, "My master is a wearisome man, it must be owned. You see he sends me home on business of the greatest consequence, and yet goes on

directing me as if I had not sense enough to carry me there. I wonder he does not come after to see if it is well done at last."

The Consul returned slowly to the cell, and comforted himself with recollecting instances of acuteness in poor Simon, which seemed to prove his stupidity was not impenetrable. The remainder of that day he took up, and pretended to read, some tattered volumes of the Legends of the Saints, which time and damp had spared, or watched the varying forms of the swift-flying clouds, as their shadows passed over the mountains. On the following, he was more pleasingly occupied by the expectation of his messenger's return. The third was spent in alternate fears and hopes; and on the next, his alarm and impatience were so much increased, that he took a hasty leave of his

unsociable host, and pursued the way to Vallerargues on foot; an achievement which no other consideration would have induced him to undertake, and which, but for occasional assistance, and lifts he met with on the way, he might never have been able to perform.

CHAPTER X.

Ciascuno apra ben gli orecchi
Di doman nessun si paschi,
Oggi sian, giovani e vecchi
Lieti ognun, femmine e maschi,
Ogni tristo pensier caschi
Facciam festa tuttavia;
Chi vuol esser lieto sia,
Di doman non ci è certezza.

Donne e giovinetti amanti,
Viva Bacco, e viva Amore,
Ciascun suoni, balli, e canti,
Arda di dolcezza il core:
Non fatica, non dolore,
Quel ch' ha esser, convien sia:
Chi vuol esser lieto sia,
Di domau, non ci è certezza.

Lorenzo di Medici.

But while the Consul was thus wearying himself at the hermitage, Simon and his companion proceeded gaily along, with

that jocund freedom and familiarity which form the charm of life amongst the less polished orders of society. Sometimes relating strange wonders and fearful adventures, sometimes making the echoes ring to scraps of old romances, most grievously devoid of harmony and measure. The way was not tedious, and after quitting the mountainous district, they traversed the country surrounding the little town of Sauve, which presents many singularities of scenery rarely met with elsewhere. It is almost entirely covered with rocks, which have been split into the most fantastic forms. Amongst these, there appears scarcely sufficient soil to nourish the smallest moss or plant; and yet in their crevices, the inexhaustible fertility of nature has deposited the seeds or kernels of almost every fruit that the climate favours, and which flourish with

a luxuriance unknown in spots apparently more propitious to their growth. Some of these rocks are shaded by the broad-leafed fig, bearing twice in the year its store of green and purple fruit; on others, the greatest profusion of cherry, peach, apricot, cornel, and plumb-trees are found; and in the months of April and May the richness and luxuriance of their blossoms can scarcely be imagined, strongly contrasting with the barrenness of the scene they adorn, and as if lavished by the bounty of some beneficent fairy. Scarcely have these thrown off their bloom, than the rocks are anew adorned with clusters of double roses, which, in colour and smell, rival those of the parterre; and the caper, with its dark shining leaves and milk-white flowers, enlivened by a light purple tuft, creeps round their base.

The town of Sauve, though now a place of small consequence, was the theatre of many of the achievements of the hardy Camisards, and the scene of the ludicrous transformation of one of their chiefs into a royalist commander, by means of which he not only surprised the garrison, but was received and feasted by the high and haughty De Vibrac, then lord of the place, who unwillingly subjected himself to such a degradation. At present, little of stratagem, and not much of war, is carried on there; for it would be ungenerous to give credit to the calumnies raised against the peaceful females of the place, and the feudal power of the seigneurs, cut down by the Revolution, is scarcely remembered in the insignificance of a petty country town.

It was noon when our travellers, after passing a bridge over the Vidourle, which

rolls its clear and rapid current through Sauve, reached the market-place, and, had such an important circumstance escaped their memory, the sounds of merriment that were heard would quickly have reminded them that this was one of the last days of Carnival.

"Ah!" exclaimed Simon, "it's an ill wind that blows no one good; if it had not been for the death of poor Grizzy, I should now be trudging after my master, who is a complete spoil-sport, and have given a side-look at the boys and girls, while my feet could scarcely be kept from joining them; but I'm of another sort, as you shall see."

So saying, he ran forward to where a motley band, dressed in the most grotesque manner, and with loud laughter and shouts of mirth, were dancing with a degree of enjoyment peculiar to their nation, and

hardly to be understood by strangers. Simon broke the ring without ceremony, by seizing the hands of two stout vine-dressers, disguised in the holiday suits that had adorned their grandmothers; and making signs to Gaspard to follow his example, was soon lost to every idea but the frenzied delight of the present moment. When the dance was ended, the party, pleased with the gaiety of the strangers, insisted on drinking to the prosperity of their journey; and they accordingly repaired to the cabaret, where the young men of the dance were accustomed to end the day in feast and revelry.

Mine host of the cabaret was a man who loved news almost as well as he loved customers, and now stood in the full enjoyment of both these inclinations, in the midst of a noisy group, all eager to talk, and inclined by the hilarity of the moment to talk without reserve.

"And where may you be from, gentlemen?" he inquired, as soon as he gathered from the strangers' countenances that his freedom would not be displeasing. "You are going on business, I suppose, to the low country, or perhaps returning from a visit in the mountains? You must have had a cold journey, for they tell me Spring never travels up so high; and you won't object to a cheerful glass, and a mouthful to stay your hunger."

Simon, not to be wanting in politeness, and pretty communicative by nature, satisfied his curiosity; at the same time adding, "a man must be a born fool to refuse such an offer; but it is of great consequence that I should not be kept long, for I have a letter of importance to deliver into the hands of the Prior of St. Roc, which my master would trust to no one else."

"And who is your master?" cried a voice from among the crowd.

Simon turned round, and perceived, with some astonishment, seated on a stone bench at the front of the house, the pilgrim Father Bernardine, who was well known to him, from his visits at Vallerargues.

"Who is my master, do you ask, Father," said Simon. "If you knew me, you would him; but as age has, perhaps, dimmed your eye-sight, I tell you that I am Simon Chas, valet de ville, at your service, and my master is Dominic Vidal, consul, at no man's service, I can promise you, unless he is well paid for it."

"Then you are on your way to your village," replied the Pilgrim, "and I would gladly bear you company on the road, for I do not care to pass alone through the midst of so many, drunk, as

it were, with the vain pleasures of the time."

Simon's countenance fell at these words. He had always found it very difficult to give a plain, direct refusal; and yet the society of the Reverend Father would, he feared, prove a check on the gaiety he felt peculiarly inclined to indulge. This comes, thought he, of turning out of my way, when I ought to have been thinking of my errand. "But, Sir," he continued aloud, "much as I should value your society, I must now forego it, as my business leads me to St. Roc, and I am even forbidden to enter Vallerargues, on pain of a penance on my shoulders."

"That need be no hinderance," replied the Pilgrim: "I am well known at St. Roc, and to a wanderer every point of the compass points home."

Simon had no other excuse to offer,

but determined, under pretence of haste, to step on with such agility that the poor old man should be unable to keep up with him. As soon, therefore, as he had partaken of what was offered him, with the additional satisfaction of knowing his new acquaintances were to treat him, he set out to put his device in execution; but, contrary to his expectation, the Pilgrim seemed endued with unusual vigour, and so far from being left behind, fairly exhausted the breath of the panting valet, who was unused to much exertion.

At the next village Simon again thought it necessary to recruit, for here too pleasure and mirth were ready to entice him; and, in short, overcome by the jollity he everywhere met, and the kindness of his acquaintance, who thickened in number as he drew nearer home, and forced him, not unwillingly, to pledge them in re-

peated bumpers, before the evening closed, he was far beyond what is considered the point of pleasurable excitement. His words became, by degrees, more incoherent—his ideas more clouded; the past, present, and future, floated before him with the rapidity and brokenness of the visions of slumber, till, at length, he was lost to all consciousness, and on awaking, after some hours' sound sleep, perceived he was extended by the side of the road, deserted by his companions, and the bright stars of heaven shining on his folly. It was long before he could be assured it was not a dream, but the chilly night air soon convinced him to the contrary. Rising, therefore, in haste, he staggered along with unsteady steps, and, guided by instinct rather than reflection, found himself at the entrance of Vallerargues before he had even perceived whither he was

going. With the well-known sight, old ideas and recollections returned. It was midnight, and just as he arrived the annual procession was parading the streets, whose approach makes the heart of every rustic belle beat with expectation. It consists of a troop of young men, accompanied by a hautboy, who stop at the dwellings of their fair ones, and mark the door with a burning taper, while at the same time the music strikes up, and the troop join in the simple air that accompanies these words in the provincial dialect of the country:

Accampas d'yio filletta, accampas d'yio,
Auras d' Haubaïde
Lou divendre, lou dijeano!

Heavily passes the night with the young girl who is not the object of this honour, which is not, however, wholly disinterested, since, as the song commands,

they are expected to be provided with eggs, dried raisins, sweetmeats, and other simple provisions, or even money, which is collected on the following morning, by the same troop, leading about a boy clothed in rags, and seated on an ass between two immense panniers, and known by the name of " the Carnival." This contribution goes to aid the feasting, which closes this season of rejoicing, and ushers in Lent.

To this merry troop Simon hastened to join himself, nothing loth to give the reins to his fancy, and recal the happy moments of youthful liberty, which he had exchanged for matrimonial bondage and the cares of office.

In the morning fresh follies offered themselves. The " Masquers quaint" were again abroad, and the scenes of the last day renewed with spirits undepressed

and limbs unwearied. Here a party of stout labourers frisked about, in flowing skirts and old-fashioned coëffes; there another set, in more grotesque apparel, followed a Savoyard, who led by a chain and muzzle a man covered with black sheep-skins, and imitating the awkward motions of a dancing bear; a little farther children and young girls were disguised in the picturesque dresses of the neighbouring provinces, or, with coquettish airs, exchanged their every-day costume for the garb in which poetry has decked the shepherds and shepherdesses of Arcadia. Here an immense wig half concealed the laughing face of a boy of fifteen; there, the military hat and feather gave an air of impudence to his lively sister. At one corner, a pretended quack doctor excited peals of laughter by his exquisite imitation; at another, a recruit-

ing serjeant dealt his blows on a set of raw recruits, whose well-feigned stupidity was equally diverting. Here a cracked drum, and there a squeaking fiddle, set all in motion. Songs resounded from every quarter; shouts and screams of joy rent the air, and seemed the utterance of spirits too buoyant for control. Nor was the dance forgotten by this dance-loving people. Under a long row of mulberry trees, where the aged sat looking on, and lamenting the pleasant days they remembered as so superior to the present, the light-footed pairs assembled, dressed in white, their hats and caps ornamented with pink ribands: nothing aukward was to be seen in their movements, and many a court lady might have envied the grace of these village girls. All was bustle—all was mirth; men, women, and children, seized with one common frenzy.

Subordination forgotten, authority laid aside, were the order of the day. Care was banished—thoughtlessness reigned undisturbed; and there was no unconcerned spectator to stand by, as if surveying one vast Bedlam, and pity or smile at the annual insanity of his fellow-creatures. I speak of the last century, for the extravagance of the custom is fast declining. When men cease to be slaves, they have a sufficient relish for life to dispense with the stimulus of a periodical fit of madness.

On the evening of the same day that the Consul left the hermitage, Simon, having, upon the principle that "the absent and the dead are but as pictures," prevailed on Perrette to lend him a suit of his master's clothes, was personating him half over the village, and with the freedom which the Carnival allows, even

ventured with a band of his fellow-masquers into the precincts of Mademoiselle Coste's apartment, where that lady, with three or four of kindred taste, sat lamenting the follies of the time, and longing to be forced into a participation of them.

The jovial Simon was already at the damsel's feet, and, in his assumed character, pouring into her ear the declaration of a violent passion. The fair one listened, and smiled, with affected displeasure, but secret satisfaction; for such sounds, even in jest, are delightful to female ears unused to their music; when the door opened, and there rushed in a crowd of women and children, headed by no less unwelcome a visiter than the Consul himself, who arrived just in time to see how well he could be represented. Poor Simon started up. There was a

momentary pause, occasioned by the drollery of the scene, for, the mask excepted, it seemed difficult to say which was "le vrai Amphytrion;" only, it was remarked, that the real Consul looked as he appeared to his inferiors, and his terrified prototype resembled him when crouching before his superiors.

But too much anger was bursting forth from every quarter for the silence to be prolonged, and a volley of abuse soon made the unhappy valet regret his short-lived ambition. There was on one side Leah Coste, who began to be ashamed of the liberty taken with her tender sentiments; there was on the other, Simon's spouse, who, tearing the mask from his face, now ascertained, what had already been hinted to her, that her husband, instead of returning with wonted submission under her conjugal care, was frolicking

away his time, cash, and credit, in idle fooleries; there was a crowd always ready to rail against an unsuccessful joker; and, more formidable than all, there was his master, and with his appearance returned the recollection of the charge he had not only left unfulfilled, but totally forgotten. Vidal, his face pale, and his under lip trembling with rage, seized him by the collar, exclaiming, "Do you know me, you villain?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Simon,—"it does not require three eyes to do that; and—and," endeavouring to loosen the firm grasp that threatened to choke him, "you're welcome home, Sir."

Simon spoke this almost unconsciously, so completely had his fears deranged his ideas.

His master answered with a box on the ear, which made the light flash from his

eyes, and sent him reeling to the other end of the room. "And you would add jesting to your impudence, would you, Sir?' said Vidal.

"Jesting, indeed!" muttered Simon; "why a man might as well think of it with his head in a bear's mouth. And what great harm have I done, that I am to be treated worse than a dog?"

"That I'll soon make you remember, sirrah," said Vidal. "Was it nothing to disobey my orders, and leave me perched up among the rocks like a wounded kite? —nothing to make me walk home on foot? —nothing to take my new coat and breeches, and render yourself a laughing-stock in them for the whole village?— nothing to——"

"Gently, master," said Simon: "if you run on so fast with my offences, you'll leave me no time to make my defence.

I'll begin my story from the time we set out, and this company shall judge between us."

"Peace, prating fool!" exclaimed the Consul, not wishing all his affairs to be publicly canvassed.

"Nay," said Simon, "I'll be as brief as possible."

"Brief or not," replied the Consul, "I command you to be silent;" then added, in a whisper, "have you delivered my note?"

"No," answered Simon.

"Then give it me," said Vidal, "this instant."

Simon, who till now had forgotten the very existence of the note, began in great haste to feel, first in one pocket, then in the other—turned them inside out—searched his hat,—but all in vain; while the enraged Consul excited him to dili-

gence, by whispering the most violent threats in his ear.

"What a blockhead, I am," at length exclaimed Simon, as if struck by some sudden recollection: "sure this was not the coat I had on,—it must be in the pocket of my jacket, with a good piece of bread and cheese I left there: I'll bring it in an instant." So saying, he ran out of the room, and had turned the corner of the street before Vidal was aware of his intention.

To arrive at the friend's house where he had changed his dress—convince himself the paper was nowhere to be found, and leave the village, was the work of a few moments. The difficulty in which he was placed seemed to sharpen his wits; and, forced by necessity to decide immediately what was to be done, he could think of no place of refuge so proper as

the priory of St. Roc, where he hoped to excuse himself before his master should arrive. He soon reached the priory—the heat drops pouring down his face with the violence of the speed he had made—his head scarcely cleared of the fumes of his late repeated libations—and his dress still presenting the whimsical appearance of his masquerading frolic. The porter, Stout Francis, as he was called, was, happily, an old friend of Simon's, or he would most probably have turned away such a fantastic figure with abuse.

"How now, Simon," he cried, when his loud knocking summoned him to the gate; "what makes you, at this late hour, bring your foolery here? It's well for you the Prior has just retired to his room: if he had been in the court, as he was not long ago, he'd have taught you to play your pranks again on holy ground."

"Was ever man so unlucky," replied

Simon, with a look of disappointment, "when I must speak to his reverence, to arrive just too late."

"You speak with his reverence!" exclaimed the porter, lifting up his hands with astonishment, "why the very walls would shake if such a figure entered the priory; the fathers would think nothing less than that some malicious sprite was come to bewitch them, and you would stand a chance of being drowned in a sea of holy water, thrown upon you by way of exorcism."

"That may be," said Simon, "but I know, my trusty friend, Francis, if you do not procure me an interview with your prior, I stand a greater of being undone for life."

"I am sorry, for it," said the Porter, with a compassionate shrug of the shoulders, "but the thing's impossible."

"But I tell you I have business with

him," said Simon impatiently ; "business of importance relating to my master."

"Doubtless what relates to your master is very important to himself," replied the Porter, "but if it does not concern mine, he'll care little about it, let me tell you."

"Suppose it should, though!" said Simon.

"Why then," replied the Porter, "give me a hint of what it's about ; I can soon judge if he will think it worth listening to."

"Impossible!" said Simon, "it would take me half an hour by our clock, which goes slower than any other in the country, to open the subject to you ; but gain me a five minutes' audience, and when it is over, I'll promise to come back to your lodge, provided you have a good fire, and a cheering bottle, and tell you how my master and I have been travelling on

the mountains,—how we lost our mule,—how we were half starved by a skin-flint of a Hermit, with reverence be it spoken; in short, such strange and wondrous adventures as shall serve you to talk of till next Christmas. So try what you can do for me, and meanwhile I will step into your house and make myself look a little less like a merry-andrew, if I can."

The porter, yielding to his remonstrances, sent a lay-brother with the request; and, in a short time, much to his surprise, Simon was ushered into the Prior's presence, wondering what was become of the courage which had led him to think he could support such an honour. He had, however, his attention sufficiently awake, to perceive that his reverence was at the farther end of the apartment, in earnest conversation with a person whom, notwithstanding the gloom, he recognised

to be Father Bernardine; but their discourse was carried on in a low whisper, and before the Prior had advanced towards him, the Pilgrim had retired.

With much needless circumlocution, and many wearisome repetitions, Simon at length explained to the Prior the cause of his appearance, and related that his master had despatched him with a letter, which he had unfortunately lost on the way; but he hoped it would be of the less consequence, as he assured him he knew all it contained, and would not keep from him a single article. This offer, indeed, he thought he might safely make, for, knowing nothing of the midnight adventure, he only conjectured that it related to the rencontre with the young shepherd, and the suspicions excited by what they had heard respecting him. Simon concluded with entreating his reverence to

save him from his master's anger, who, he assured him, was desperate when provoked, and feared neither man nor devil, only his reverence."

"And who did you tell me were your companions," said the Prior, "when you were sensible of losing the letter?"

"Please you, Sir," said Simon, "I never was sensible of losing it, till my master frightened my memory back into me, and of my two companions, one of them would not take it, for the best of all reasons, that he cannot read a line even of print hand, and the other I should not be willing to suspect, because one should judge of a man by his company, and if my eyes didn't strangely deceive me, I just now saw him in this room."

"What, Father Bernardine!" said the Prior; "yes, he sometimes visits me on errands of charity, but that has nothing

to do with the subject in question, and he is so humble, he likes not our acquaintance should be known.—To return to what you were speaking of. You are trustworthy of course," he continued with a look of contempt, "or your master would not have confided such a secret to your discretion."

Simon bowed low to what he took for a compliment, and was proceeding again to put in his claim for protection, when the brother who had introduced him, entering the room, announced that Mons. Vidal was waiting below.

The Consul had, indeed, without suspecting his valet's contrivance, thought it best to bear the brunt of an interview, before report should inform the Prior of his return, and late as it was, proceeded to the priory, without even changing his travelling suit."

"It is well," said the Prior; "desire him to attend me."

Poor Simon, trembling with apprehension, crept behind the arm-chair, in which the Prior seated himself, and could scarcely be persuaded by a promise from the latter, that no harm should befal him, from hiding himself under it. He had but time to take this measure of precaution, before Vidal entered, his hat in his hand, and a mixture of effrontery and terror visible on his countenance.

"You have exceeded, Sir, I think," said the Prior coldly, "the time I fixed for your return, and are doubtless prepared to account for the delay."

"Doubtless, my lord," replied Vidal, bowing almost to the ground, and he then, in his turn, proceeded to relate the circumstances which had occurred during his absence, and the certainty he felt of hav-

ing discovered the object of his search; hoping that the Prior would not long delay furnishing him with the means of inducing the young man to accompany him to the Priory. The private interview he had had, he of course forbore to mention. "This your lordship should have known, since," continued Vidal, "but for the ill-conduct of the messenger, whom, judging it best to remain on the spot myself, I despatched with a letter, informing you of all particulars, and whose negligence shall be chastised in a manner he little thinks."

Simon, at these words, began again to tremble.

"What you have just told me, Sir," replied the Prior, "I was previously informed of, and I also know what it appears you wish to conceal, that you give no more credit to the tale than I do myself ———"

"Not credit it, my lord," exclaimed Vidal, with a look of great surprise, "why I'd stake my existence that the young man whom I conversed with three days since is the———"

"Is," interrupted the Prior scornfully ——" But it is beneath me, to waste my time upon you. Weave the web thicker, Sir, if you hope to blind my eyes; be content to own you have been faithless to the trust reposed in you, without endeavouring to pass the offspring of infamy and guilt for the pure blood of a noble house. Your villany, Monsieur Vidal, is not calculated to prove such a source of profit to you as you are disposed to wish."

The astonished Consul found it vain to explain, and protest his sincerity. His patron was evidently prepossessed with the idea that he came purposely to shield himself from punishment, under the cover

of some deception, and nothing he could urge served either to shake this belief, or to lead him to disclose the cause of his suspicion. Overcome by the Prior's inflexibility, Vidal was obliged to be silent, pondering in his own mind, on the impossibility of coping with a man who seemed determined not to be convinced by either facts or reasonings, and secretly resolving to depend less in future on the favour of others, than on his own dexterity for rising in life.

After some time, the Prior continued: "You have other occurrences to relate, I believe, Sir. I wish to do every man justice; I hear willingly, and only condemn when I am compelled to it. But before we enter on a new subject, I warn you, when you next betray what is intrusted to you alone, to choose your confidants with more judgment." And so saying, he

rose, and pushing the chair on one side, discovered to the still greater astonishment of the Consul, the terrified Simon, who fell forwards, as soon as the support against which he had leant was withdrawn.

Unmindful of the Prior's presence, Vidal was about to vent on him the rage that boiled in his breast, when the former interfering, stopped his uplifted arm, declaring he would only increase his displeasure by such ill-timed severity, and dismissing Simon, with permission to remain at the Priory that night, and assurances of protection for the future, commanded Vidal to relate what he had further to say.

As the Consul was uncertain what information Simon might have been able to give, he was fearful of deviating from the fact of the appearance of the smug-

glers, and laying aside the embellishments he had prepared, for the first time in his life spoke the truth, and nothing but the truth. The Prior listened attentively, and when he had finished speaking, bade him be under no uneasiness, as he took upon himself thoroughly to investigate that affair; "But," he added, "as I find, Sir, contrary, I own, to my expectation, that you are of such a frank, open, unreserved disposition, I must beg you, also, will take up your residence under my roof, till what you relate respecting so extraordinary a circumstance is cleared up. I will have no secret communications render your important intelligence unavailing to the church and state. In a few days, too, I shall be better able to determine whether such zeal, without discretion, is most beneficial or hurtful to my interests; and whether I

can pardon the insult, which a fear of what you richly deserve has prompted you to offer me and my family."

This was said with a tone of civil contempt that forbade all reply; and the mortified Consul was conducted to a distant cell, whose bare walls and ungarnished bedstead, and above all, whose bolts and bars, announced the impossibility of escape, seemed rather to indicate a prison than the chamber prepared for a guest.

CHAPTER XI.

The swallow undisturb'd hath hung
Her nest on roofs which erst have rung
With sounds of harp and minstrelsy,
Of pageants, pomp, and revelry,
When at the high born lady's call
The feast and dance in banner'd hall,
At winter evening's welcome close
To ancient warlike music rose.

Midnight Meditations at Tixhall.

WHILE the Consul was thus left in solitude and silence, and Simon concluded an evening, fraught with so much alarm, in jollity and good fellowship with the Porter, we must return to the village, where their sudden appearance and disappearance excited an unusual degree of wonder. The Consul's absence was a relief to

many who groaned under his daily vexations, and perhaps to none more than to Rose, who was always intimidated by his pretensions. She was becoming every day better acquainted with the virtues and amiable disposition of Madame Durand, and her affection for this lady rapidly increased. She had also the pleasure of meeting Isidore continually, under the sanction of her presence, and she easily perceived, that Madame Durand distinguished him far beyond any of the other inhabitants of the village, and though timidity restrained her from expressing her own sentiments even to her mother, she felt that her new friend had penetrated into her heart, and her satisfaction increased from the consciousness of her approval.—Rose was young, and the gay visions of hope, which gild but so short a period of life, still floated around her.

She could not doubt of Isidore's affection, though prudence might, for the present, force him to be silent; and with this persuasion firmly fixed in her mind, nothing seemed impossible that could render the future delightful. Some persons in her situation might have found a thousand charming difficulties to contend with, and have embittered the present with all the luxury of imaginary woe; but fortunately for Rose, such sickly sensibility was foreign to her nature, and to see every approving eye brighten at her approach, was a happiness not to be thrown aside with ungrateful peevishness, as unworthy of acceptance. Neither was she the victim of that romantic restlessness which renders even some misfortunes preferable to the calm of life, in which none but every-day virtues can be practised, and the more showy qualities, like a holiday

suit, must be put by against a fitter time of display. There was a perpetual sunshine in her bosom, that beamed through her expressive countenance; and Isidore, while he gazed on her with admiration, wished, in vain, that it were possible for him to enjoy the same tranquillity.

Man is, by nature and circumstances, rendered more anxious than his feebler helpmate; he is called upon for exertion to avert evils, as well as patience to support them, and Isidore was conscious that it was not his part to sit indolently down, and murmur that fortune passed him by, to yield her assistance to more active claimants. Before he could hope to obtain Rose from her prudent father, he must be able to prove that love had not quite blinded him, and that he did not intend to plunge the object of his regard into difficulties, which he might have found it

hard to struggle with even alone. He felt that no violence of passion can excuse the man who involves the woman he loves, in scenes of misery she was too thoughtless and too confiding to foresee; and that, hard as it would be, to give up all hope, that must be the alternative, if some plan did not offer to improve his future prospects. Friends, such, at least, upon whom the world bestows that title, he had none; energy and perseverance were not wanting, nor the heart that would endure anything for the sake of her he loved. But while he felt convinced there was nothing he would not willingly undertake in such a cause, day after day passed on, and still he found it impossible to put in practice a scheme which had been suggested by Madame Durand, and of which Mons. la Porte highly approved, that he should repair, for two or three years, to the

nearest Protestant university, where educaation could be obtained without much expense, and where he could qualify himself for some employment more suited to his talents and disposition than the drudgery of agriculture. Madame Durand had also insisted on his not speaking more explicitly to Rose than he had hitherto done, at least till his departure was so far determined as to be unalterable; and on this condition alone, promised him every assistance in her power. Isidore acquiesced, but his resolution continually failed him when the moment was to be fixed; and it was at length agreed, almost without his consent, that it should be delayed no longer than the return of his mother's flock from their annual abode on the mountains, which would be towards the end of summer.

To the grief of those who watched her with the assiduity of sincere affection,

Madame Durand's health had long been in a declining state, and the physicians in vain prescribed for the body which was worn out by mental distress. They repeatedly told her, that perfect calm was absolutely necessary to her recovery. She smiled, and outwardly obeyed their injunctions, for no ear ever heard her complain how impossible it was for such a heart as she possessed to be at ease. But those accustomed to her looks too well knew, that suffering was still working within, and that, with all the patience and resignation of a saint, she felt for those she loved all the sympathy of a woman.

Notwithstanding this, her presence was always an excitement to cheerfulness. She endeavoured to dissipate from the minds of her friends even the pain of knowing she was not happy; and in the

midst of bodily suffering, or mental distress, possessed so much self-command, that neither impatience nor murmur were ever known to escape her lips. Rose was not, however, to be deceived, and without perpetually obtruding her commiseration, sadly marked every change of countenance, and counted every secret sigh of one so justly dear to her. This was the only damp to her enjoyment; yet it was also accompanied by the satisfaction of knowing, that her society brought relief with it; and though a sense of propriety had prevented her from endeavouring to discover the source of Madame Durand's uneasiness, yet she perceived the remembrance of it seemed to weigh lighter when she was by, and that her gentle endeavours to excite other thoughts in the mind of her kind benefactress were not wholly without effect.

One evening, after the receipt of a letter from her brother, which seemed to have unusually affected her, Madame Durand had consented to accompany her young friend in an evening's ramble. The weather was still variable, but the day had been remarkably fine, and the beams of a southern sun gave the glow of summer to the young verdure of spring. There was a freshness in the rising corn, and the first shoots of the vines and mulberry-trees, that formed a lively contrast with the bright azure of the cloudless sky. The fields were gay with snowdrops, wild hyacinths, jonquils, tulips, and and irises; and in a neighbouring swamp, myriads of frogs disturbed the stillness of the air, with their incessant and varied croakings. Here and there a labourer in his vineyard or olive-ground cheered his toil with a song; and from the village fountain, the

merry voices of women, employed in the same cares as the daughter of King Alcinous in ancient days, came softened by the distance.

They passed along the outer wall of the village, where, according to the custom common in France, the females sat at their work, while enjoying the full blaze of the sun. Here a row of large wheels employed a party of girls in spinning a coarse wool into stuff for their jackets and petticoats; there the mothers, assembled in coteries, pursued the labours of the needle or distaff; while others, like the light troops of an army, without ceasing an instant from their knitting, kept moving from group to group, as the gossip and the scandal increased or lessened in interest. Swarms of children, with swarthy, unwashed hands and faces, enjoyed their idle sports and their sly

tricks on the passers-by; while the cries of the young, with the incessant volubility of the old—the whirling of wheels, laughter of the hearers, and eloquence of the speakers, formed a concert, doubtless very pleasing to those who performed in it.

As Madame Durand advanced, many by degrees left their places to enjoy the delight of gratified curiosity; but in all there was a look of deference and civility that rather amused than offended her, especially as she partly understood the remarks of astonishment and admiration which were made in their native patois, on her dress and appearance. After leaving the village, a steep, though winding ascent, in many places cut out of the solid rock, led to the Castle, where the family of De Courcy had formerly displayed its magnificence. It was built in an abrupt angle of the road, that wound round the

base of its firm bastions, and to the rear it looked upon the park, which was once considered as the principal ornament of the country, and could still exhibit some fine old trees. Nor was the view presented from this height less worthy of notice. Even at this early period of the year it could boast of a thousand beauties, which the lovely month of May was soon to bring into full luxuriance. Far as the eye could distinguish, lay one immense plain, so richly cultivated as to resemble a garden, diversified with vineyards, olivets, rows of mulberry, and peach, apricot, and cherry-trees, mixed with the early-flowering almond, the rich scarlet of the pomegranate, and the pale bloom of the quince. These formed the hedge-rows to the neat farms and cottages that were dispersed about.

On one side a small river pursued its

way, meandering like a silver snake beneath a rising ground covered with the dwarf evergreen oak, while tufts of larger growth shaded the different mills that were built on its banks, where the water foamed and sparkled over the opposing dam. To back this lovely picture, lay several ranges of mountains, increasing in height, and softening in colour, as they approached the horizon, where their lofty summits, covered with snow, seemed to repose against the deep unclouded azure of the heavens.

Madame Durand bent her steps to the castle. It was now uninhabited, and an old woman, with her half-witted son, who had formed a comfortless abode in one of the outer buildings, was intrusted with the keys of the neglected apartments. After wandering about slowly and carelessly for some time, Rose, who perceived that

her friend looked fatigued, begged she would permit her to ask for the keys, that she might rest for a short time. Madame Durand consented, and while Rose was absent, busied herself in endeavouring to clear from the weeds a few scattered flowers, which still sprung up, in dwindled growth, where the garden had formerly been. Alas! it was now a scene of melancholy desolation, in which time and neglect had each done his part. Long waving grass choked up the once nicely-gravelled walks. The basins, from which, in former times, the well-taught streams rose in every variety of form, falling again, in sheets of liquid silver, over laughing cupids and bearded river gods, to the surprise of the vulgar, and the admiration of the great, were now either dried up, or presented pools of stagnant water covered with weeds and decayed

leaves. The arbours, which used to sustain the rich burden of the luxuriant vine, were entangled in its branches, which trailed neglected on the ground. The useless dial had fallen from its carved pedestal. On the broken steps, which led from terrace to terrace, and in the massy balustrades, small gray lizards appeared and vanished with the speed and silence of fairies. But how far different from the feelings excited by the wild confusion of nature, are those we experience on surveying the ruins of art! These speak in strong language how powerless is man, since, if he slacken his care but for a season, the dominion escapes from his hand, and that which was once his pride offers only images of decay and desolation.

When Rose returned, a heavy shower rendered the shelter of the castle extremely

acceptable. With some difficulty they turned the rusty lock, and passing through an empty hall, ascended a spacious pillared staircase, which no longer led to comfort and domestic happiness. Room opened into room with melancholy grandeur, and as the doors swung idly on their hinges, their sound seemed to say, it was long since mortal foot had passed there.

Rose, who had often wished to examine the castle, gazed with silent admiration on the immense mirrors, the faded tapestry, and tarnished gildings, everywhere lavished; and fancied that the ideas of persons accustomed to such splendour must be as different from hers, as the airy visions of ethereal beings from the every-day thoughts of mere mortals. So intent was she in her contemplations, as not for some time to notice Madame Durand,

who had seated herself on a couch, which stood opposite to a picture of more modern date than the greater part of those which hung on the walls. Rose no sooner, however, perceived that she looked ill, than she flew towards her, and taking the hand which hung almost lifeless by her side, pressed it to her lips, looking eagerly, by turns, from the pallid cheek of her friend, to the blooming beauty on the canvass.

The picture was that of a young lady, in the prime of youth, but her loveliness was shaded by a look of sorrow; and the dress of a nun, with the black gauze curtain represented as drawn before her, gave an additional sadness to the figure. She was bending over a child, whose laughing blue eyes, curling locks, and dimpled rosy cheeks, were the emblems of health and joy. The little girl held a young

wood-pigeon by its wings, to prevent its escape, and the lady appeared to be interceding for its release, with a look that forcibly spoke her own abhorrence of slavery. In the childish graces before her, Rose was surprised to perceive an indescribable resemblance to a face she was well acquainted with, and without presuming to ask any questions, her looks betrayed what was passing in her mind.

Madame Durand, making a strong effort to recover herself, and wiping the tears from her eyes, said, "I do not wonder, my dear, that you can scarcely catch the likeness; thirty years must make a great change, and what must it be when many of them were years of sorrow?"

"And is it possible that this is your picture, and that you once lived in this castle?" said Rose with a look of innocent surprise.

Madame Durand smiled at her astonishment, and replied, "This was my home till I married."

"And the young lady?" said Rose.

"Was my sister———"

After a pause of some moments, she continued—"My dear Rose, I believe you love me?" Rose pressed her hand more closely, with a look of gratitude and pleasure. "And I am desirous, perhaps selfishly so, of making you a sharer in all my feelings. Their bitterness, I am thankful to say, is past, so you will have no occasion to suffer for me. I know I have not shed a needless, I would hope not a useless tear, and that what I have gone through has weaned me from a world we all love too well, and fixed my faith on that better inheritance which has been purchased for us. Every trial is a mercy that brings us nearer to Him who

alone can give us rest——." Madame Durand again paused, for she felt the tears of her young friend fall upon her hand, and then added, "I do not boast of being a stoic, and there are moments when the recollection of the past overpowers every resolution I had formed. It is now many years since I was in this room, and yet the scene that picture represents is as fresh to my mind, as on the day in which it passed.—Sit by me, and as I still hear the rain beating against the casements, I will give you a short sketch of my life: you will then, my love, easily understand why I wish to remain at present unknown, except to your excellent father, who has long been aware of my intentions. As the sister of the Baron de Courcy, I should be exposed to much idle curiosity on the one hand, and perhaps to an opposition on the other,

which might be prejudicial to the great cause which I have in hand.

"My mother, who has now been many years dead, was a woman of strong passions, and a determined character, considering all opposition to her will as rebellion, and every attempt at freedom in those about her, as a contempt of her authority. The submission she expected from all beneath her, she was, I own, willing to pay where she considered it due, especially to her husband and to her confessor; but the former, I grieve to say, was a libertine in principle and practice, and too careless and too fashionable to act the part of master in his family; and the latter had art sufficient to discern the defects of my poor mother's character, and to yield to her even when appearing to be her guide.—The failings of a parent are, however, a sacred sub-

ject, and I should not have said even this, if it had not been necessary to explain the events that followed. My mother had been many years married without having any children ; at length she gave birth to a daughter, who grew up in person such as you see faintly represented in that painting, and with a disposition so sweet, that I feel it difficult to do her justice. It seemed impossible for a mother to hate such a being, or that her disappointment in not having an heir, could account for the coldness with which she was always regarded. Many persons hinted that my mother, in one of her frequent devotions and pilgrimages, had made a solemn vow to dedicate her eldest child to the cloister, should she ever be blessed with a son. This might be true, but she seldom gave reasons for her actions. I only know with certainty, that,

on the birth of my brother, who is but a year older than myself, such a project became generally talked of, and the angelic docility and mildness of my beloved Laura, were considered as the signs of an extraordinary vocation in one so young. Accustomed, therefore, from her earliest years to look upon this as the destiny assigned her by Providence, she submitted without consulting her own feelings; and my father, to whom the design was mentioned, answered with indifference, that as to the girls, he cared not how soon they were disposed of, provided his son was not to be adorned with a shaven crown, and then forgot the circumstance entirely; indeed, so entirely, that when Laura was sixteen, he formed the design of marrying her to the orphan son of a nobleman, who had resided in the neighbourhood, and without thinking

it necessary to consult my mother, arranged all the preliminaries. In consequence of this, the young Count Darcy was a frequent visiter at the castle. He was formed to please a delicate mind, and Laura, unaccustomed to pleasure, but too readily opened her heart to receive its influence.—My mother would not offer direct opposition to her husband's will; but by every means in her power sought to delay, if she could not break off, the match. I was then very young, too young to understand the secret motives by which those around me were actuated, and like a child, I often gave pain, which has since made me shed many bitter tears. Having been told by my maid, that Count Darcy was my sister's lover, and been made to understand young ladies did not like such things to be talked of, though why they did not I could not learn, it

was my great delight, when my dear Laura chid me for any childish mischief, to revenge myself by telling where I had met her with the Count, and how she blushed when he offered her a rose; and the look of pain with which, in my mother's presence, she seemed to entreat my silence, only amused me, as I mistook it for the confusion I had been taught to expect. Alas! I little knew that every such idle tale, exaggerated by my loquacity, drew upon her bitter reproaches.

"It was my mother's aim to induce her to refuse the Count, upon the plea of a scruple of conscience, as being already called to the service of the sanctuary; and so great was the struggle excited in my sister's mind, between a virtuous affection, sanctioned by the will of a father, on the one hand, and religious terrors on the other, that I have often won-

dered her life did not even then prove the sacrifice of the secret conflict. As the winter drew on, my father, as usual, set out for Paris, and the Count to join his regiment in a distant province, fondly hoping the ensuing spring would see him the happiest of men.—Laura's heart sunk as she listened to the gay visions his fancy pictured, and yet she dared not bid him doubt their accomplishment.

"What passed between her and my mother, I cannot say, but she became daily paler and more dejected, and in less than a month after their departure, was removed to the convent of La Consolation, of which the abbess was our aunt. My brother and I lamented her absence, as children always do those who contribute to their happiness; and to whose happiness did she not contribute? and our joy was unbounded, when, after some

time, we saw her unexpectedly return.—Enraged by the letters of her sister, who represented Laura as utterly averse to the holy profession, my mother had recalled her; not indeed to yield to her wishes, but still more determined on opposing them. It was necessary to overcome her reluctance before my father's return, and my blood thrills when I relate to what extremities a parent could resort, in order to effect this. Animated by her confessor, who artfully persuaded my mother her duty called upon her to prevent such a scandal to the church, as the breach of vows, already registered in Heaven, though not pronounced on earth; she forbade her unhappy child her presence,—degraded her to the society of the lowest menials,—would not suffer her, though weak and sinking under the weight of her trials, to receive the small-

est attendance,—clothed her in such garments as the very peasants scorn, and forced her to severe and unremitting work. Often have I stolen from my bed, and creeping on tiptoe along the cold galleries which led to her miserable apartment, have endeavoured to stop her tears, which seemed to me never to cease flowing, and by my caresses, and offers of cakes and sugar plumbs, to excite a momentary smile. But the blow had struck too deep!

"My father had been written to, on my sister's retiring to the convent, and took no other notice of the affair, than remarking, at the end of a few hurried lines, containing orders respecting the decorations of a theatre he had erected, that there was no accounting for a young lady's taste; and he did not think the Count would long wear the willow.

" By her mother's command, Laura had written to the Count, stating this change in her views ; but it was impossible for her to deceive, and the tone of constraint which escaped my mother's observation, could not elude the quick apprehension of a lover. As soon as he could obtain leave to quit his regiment, he flew to the castle, but was refused admittance; entreaty and remonstrance were equally vain. In the anguish of doubt and despair, he hovered round a spot where all his happiness seemed shut up from him, and, by dint of bribes, at length prevailed on a man, who had constant access to our house, to deliver a letter to my sister, and at least bring him a verbal answer.

" This man, who, it seems, had no principle to restrain him, and who wished to double his gains, betrayed him ; it is most probable, at least, that it was by his means the letter reached my mother's

hands. Never shall I forget that day! It was in the depth of winter, and a tremendous storm of wind and rain added to the desolate appearance of the country. For the first time, since her return from the convent, my mother went herself to Laura's room. She passed me in the corridore, and her look was so stern, that I ran away from her in terror, without attempting my usual caresses. It is impossible to say with certainty what occurred in that interview, as no one else was present; but if any reliance can be placed on the incoherent expressions, uttered in the delirium which preceded my mother's death; finding all other means fail, she then revealed to her innocent victim the vow by which she had bound herself to consecrate her to Heaven, and called down curses on her head, if she suffered any worldly affection to hinder her from fulfilling it. It must,

therefore, have been by her command that my sister acceded to the Count's wish to speak with her even for the last time, at a little chapel in the entrance of that wood, where she had formerly solaced herself by her devotional exercises, and had consecrated every object by her care and regard: he had fixed the time for late that evening. The storm had not yet entirely abated, but her bosom was still more agitated, and she heeded it not. I was in her room when the hour struck, that warned her of her engagement, and, starting up with a look of agony, she seized me by the hand, and flew with me to the chapel, where the unhappy Count was waiting to receive her. Without giving him time to utter a word, and scarcely to remark the ravages which grief had made in that lovely face and form, she threw herself on her knees before an image of the virgin, and by the

most solemn vow, bound herself never to be his.

"Who could paint the agony of the Count! But it was useless to question her, she fell lifeless to the ground at his feet, as if the heart she could no longer offer to him, had ceased from that moment to beat. It was not till our cries had drawn to us some persons who had been set to watch her movements, and that my sister had been for many hours in her chamber, that consciousness returned. My mother, by one glance at the Count, perceived that her threats had succeeded, and bore unmoved the extravagance with which he upbraided her cruelty. As no hope remained, and even Laura refused to see him again, he returned to the army, and by his desperate courage soon procured the termination of his life and sorrows.—Laura slowly recovered, but that last effort had exhausted the powers of her

mind, and she seemed afterwards guided only by starts of fancy, or to sink into a state of listless insensibility. With the tacit compliance of deep despair, she consented to return to the convent, and finished her noviciate without a struggle, declaring, however, that she should not survive the awful ceremony that was to follow in three days. Alas! whether she felt that nature would hold out no longer, or that as reason failed her, anguish assumed a force religion could not control, must for ever remain concealed within the walls of her prison-house: within three days we were informed of her death, and her wretched parent survived but a month. My dear sister's remains were brought to the castle, and interred in the chapel I mentioned before. I will point out the spot to you, for you will not refuse a tear to the memory of so much excellence and so much sorrow."

They accordingly left the castle, and Rose returning the keys to the old woman, obtained permission to traverse the park. Madame Durand taking Rose's arm, followed the tangled path leading to the chapel, and could not forbear remarking, as she looked around upon the well-known scene, how slowly the face of nature changes, when compared with the changes in the destiny of man. "It seems to me as if the trees I sported under when a child, present the same branches to shade me in my age. There is not a spot in these grounds with which I cannot connect some interesting remembrance. Those two chestnuts, which you see so flourishing, were planted by my brother and me, and were the objects of our greatest care. We even looked at them with a sort of superstitious reverence, and foreboded some disaster whenever the wind or rain had injured their blossoms. They have

proved false omens, since a few weeks will restore them to their richest splendour, and those who planted them can only look forward to disappointment. But I must conclude my narrative. After my mother's death, which drew my father for a short time from Paris, he quitted the castle entirely, for he made a point of driving every painful recollection far from him. As he had no female relation to entrust us to, and would not suffer his ease to be interrupted by the trouble of children, we were left behind, under the care of trusty servants; and from his indifference or liberality on the subject of religion, were particularly recommended to the charge of the worthy Monsieur Brunel and his wife, then residing in the village, who had not only imbibed the Protestant opinions, but was himself a most devoted and able Pastor in that church. Yet it was his condition and abilities,

rather than these more important qualities, which drew on him my father's attention; and his regard for us led him afterwards to reside almost entirely at the castle. We loved him with the affection due to a parent, and it is not wonderful that the doctrines which fell from his lips had their due effect on our minds; though he was far from the spirit of proselyting, if that word expresses the endeavour to bring over partisans to a sect, rather than converts to the truth. The death of my father, when I was about fifteen, and my subsequent marriage, drew me for some years far away. These were years of much happiness, though I followed my husband and two sweet children to the grave, and, considering the rank in which I moved, was left in a state of comparative poverty, which I chiefly regret from its abridging me of the means of assisting my dear brother. Before I returned

to Vallerargues, he was also married, and a father, and I had soon to share his trials also. The rest of my history is well known to you; I accompanied him in his flight, and would never have left him; but the faint hope of being more useful by my absence has induced me, under a borrowed name, to revisit my native land, and the good people here have so long lost sight of me, that, with a very little precaution, I hope to remain unknown But it grows late, and the evening air is cold; let us visit the grave, and on our return home, I will mention some further particulars to you."

They now entered the chapel, and Madame Durand began to search for Laura's grave, by the uncertain light that was admitted through the ivy-mantled windows.

Rose, who followed her trembling, fancied several times, that she heard a

faint rustling, and at length could not refrain from mentioning her fears.

Madame Durand listened, but though all was still, the very idea of danger was unpleasant, and she was about to defer her search till another time, when, on looking steadily into the interior of the building, they perceived the old Pilgrim leaning on his staff, and half concealed by a massy pillar that supported the roof, gazing steadfastly upon them. Rose involuntarily screamed.

"Fear not, ladies," cried the old man, "but why do I say so? the good have no cause for fear. You come here on a pious errand———"

"Who," said Madame Durand, much astonished "gave you, Father, this insight into our intentions?"

"Lady," replied the Pilgrim, shaking his gray locks, "sorrow is sacred with me. You need not, therefore, fear my discre-

tion. When the silver cord is well nigh loosed, it is not the time for vain babblings. I am a stranger, it seems to you, but I remembered you at the first glance, though I tell it not to the world. You may rely on him whose flesh has been torn from his body, sooner than his secret from his heart.—I knew your steps would turn hither, therefore I have waited and watched to see you; and now that we are met," continued the old man, while tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, "even here, where the wolf should sooner lie down with the lamb, than you and I hold conference together, what can I say? Alas! the very words die away upon my lips, and you will hear nothing but my sighs. There is the spot you seek; pray for me."

He left the chapel, and Madame Durand remained lost in astonishment at his incomprehensible words. The grave to

which he pointed, bore no appearance of neglect, but seemed to have been lately strewn with fresh flowers; yet, whether the Pilgrim was the guardian of the place, and if so, what could excite his interest there, were points it was impossible to discover. After some time they retired, and perceived him still hovering at a distance, as if undecided whether again to engage in conversation; but seeing some one approach to meet them, he withdrew, and as they looked back to survey the darkly-frowning towers of the castle, behind which the moon was at that moment rising, like a globe of pale fire, they still could see his venerable figure under the broad shade of the avenue which led to the more retired parts of the park.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON: Printed by W. CLOWES, Northumberland-court, Strand.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 041697977